

LAKOTAPTEOLE:
WOOD MOUNTAIN LAKOTA CULTURAL ADAPTATION AND MAINTENANCE
THROUGH RANCHING AND RODEO,
1880-1930

A thesis submitted to the College of Graduate Studies and Research
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
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by
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Abstract

After Chief Sitting Bull returned to the U.S. in 1881 from Canada, about 250 Lakota people remained in present-day Saskatchewan. Through archival research and oral interviews, this study interprets the way these Lakota people at Wood Mountain, Saskatchewan engaged in ranching and rodeo (some farming will be discussed as well although this was practiced on a smaller scale) in order to see what this reveals about indigenous constructions of collective identity in the difficult years of colonial displacement between 1880 and 1930. The stereotypical and persistent dichotomy of “cowboys versus Indians” will be challenged as it does damage to Aboriginal peoples’ abilities to adapt and their involvement in agriculture. Ranching and rodeo not only gave the Lakota people at Wood Mountain a viable economic lifestyle but a lifestyle that was culturally and socially fulfilling. And furthermore, from this came the motivation and ability to build a Lakota community and identity that was at once distinct yet interactive with the non-Aboriginal ranching society/lifestyle in the Wood Mountain area. This study argues that the Lakota of Wood Mountain blended traditional Lakota culture with cowboy lifestyles that allowed for the adaptation to and interaction with non-Aboriginal society, the retention of traditional Lakota cultural aspects, and the reshaping of identities and communities around this blending process.

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Lastly, thank you to my family and friends, especially my parents, siblings, and Hal Cameron who encouraged me along the way.

Dedication

This thesis study is dedicated to the Wood Mountain Lakota community members who agreed to participate in this study and journey. Additionally, this study is dedicated to all the past and present Wood Mountain Lakota people that are included in this study, and I hope their shared experiences and perspectives will help to broaden more relationships, opportunities, and understandings between non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

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Introduction

During the 2013 Super Bowl, an ad for Dodge trucks aired featuring Paul Harvey's 1978 speech "So God Made a Farmer" accompanied by beautiful photographs of American farming and ranching families, their homes, land, and livestock. The ad was effective in bringing feelings of nostalgia for family agriculture and values, although it was presented in a romanticized fashion. Some viewers questioned early on after the airing of the commercial: why was Dodge only showing Caucasian farmers and ranchers? In his article "The Whitewashing of the American Farmer: Dodge Ram Super Bowl Ad Edition," Alexis C. Madrigal found "15 white people, one black man, and two (maybe three?) Latinos" and argued that this is not a real representation of American farming, especially when so many Mexican and American-Mexican people are farm laborers.¹ Furthermore, women and girls were depicted a meager five times and usually only in roles assisting men.² Although this was an American commercial made to portray and impact American people, it still represents the typical view of agriculture across North America, including Canada. Most commentators who argue that this does not accurately depict agriculture speak of the lack of Latino/Latina and African-American people. For me, this commercial does not just validate the general public's (romanticized) belief that agriculture is a white, Christian male pursuit today, but also supports the false notion that this is the way agriculture was in the past with little or no contributions from other ethnic people, especially indigenous people.

This study interprets the way Lakota people at Wood Mountain, Saskatchewan engaged in ranching, cowboy/cowgirl, and rodeo (some farming will be discussed as well although this was practiced on a smaller scale) in order to see what this reveals about indigenous constructions of collective identity in the difficult years of colonial displacement between 1880 and 1930. For the Lakota people, ranching and cowboy ways of life made not only economic sense to provide stability, but also the means to retain Lakota cultural traditions and create social connections to the wider Wood Mountain area community.

¹ Alexis C. Madrigal, "The Whitewashing of the American Farmer: Dodge Ram Super Bowl Ad Edition," *The Atlantic*, February 4, 2013, <http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2013/02/the-whitewashing-of-the-american-farmer-dodge-ram-super-bowl-ad-edition/272825/>, accessed June 20, 2014.

² Stephanie Medley-Rath, "Advertisers Needed a Hero 'So God Made a Farmer,'" *Sociology in Focus*, February 11, 2013, <http://www.sociologyinfocus.com/2013/02/11/advertisers-needed-a-hero-so-god-made-a-farmer/>, accessed June 20, 2014.

Historically, the term “Sioux” referred to Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota people, and Teton or Lakota referred to the western-most part of these nations who live on the Northern Great Plains of the northern United States and southern Canada. In their own understandings, the Dakota, Lakota, and Nakota make up the Oceti Sakowin or the Seven Council Fires. According to Lakota scholar Craig Howe, “the term ‘Sioux,’ however, is inappropriate to use since it is not a word in any of the three divisions of the Oceti Sakowin confederacy.”³ The Oceti Sakowin comprises seven oyates (nations): four oyates within the Dakota division, two Nakota oyates, and the last and youngest oyate is the Tetonwan, the Lakota division.⁴ The Lakota are divided further into seven oyates: Oglala, Mniconjou, Sicangu (sometimes called “Brule” or “Burnt Thigh”), Oohenunpa (also referred to as “Two Kettles”), Itazico (also called “Sans Arc”), Sihasapas (sometimes referred to as “Blackfeet”), and Hunkpapa.⁵

Some Lakota people escaped the American cavalry to present-day southern Saskatchewan after the Battle of the Little Bighorn in 1876 in Montana where the Lakota and their allies were victorious over Lieutenant Colonel Custer and his regiment. This battle has been immortalized in numerous films, history books, and monuments and is probably the best known event of Lakota history by the general public and scholars alike. After the Battle of the Little Bighorn, approximately five thousand Lakota people crossed the medicine line or the international border from the United States into Canada. The majority of the Lakota returned to the United States by 1881 when Chief Sitting Bull surrendered after facing starvation owing to the disappearance of the bison herds and being denied assistance by the Canadian government. However, about 250 Lakota people remained in the Wood Mountain area, in what is now southern Saskatchewan.⁶ Finally granted a temporary reserve in 1910,⁷ the Wood Mountain Lakota remain the only Lakota First Nation in Canada.

While most people and scholars still view the Lakota as “American Indians,” there have been Lakota people in Canada for generations before and after 1876. Canadian scholars Leo J. Omani and David G. McCrady do a superb job of providing evidence and arguments to show

³ Center for American Indian Research and Native Studies (CAIRNS), *Oceti Sakowin Origins and Development: Foundational Principles for Educators* (Martin, S.D.: CAIRNS, 2012), 11.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., 15.

⁶ Ron Papandrea, *They Never Surrendered: The Lakota Sioux Band that Stayed in Canada* (La Vergne, Tennessee: Lightning Source, 2009), 1.

⁷ Elizabeth and Rory Thomson, “The Lakota,” in *Wood Mountain Uplands: From the Big Muddy to the Frenchman River*, ed. Thelma Poirier (Wood Mountain, SK: Wood Mountain Historical Society, 2000), 76-77.

that the Lakota were living in Canada for many generations as part of their traditional territory.⁸ American literature on Lakota history glosses over the years between 1876 and 1881 in Canada and Canadian literature on the topic tends to merely focus on those years and the interactions between Chief Sitting Bull and North West Mounted Police Major James Walsh. For example, *The Lance and the Shield: The Life and Times of Sitting Bull* by Robert M. Utley, *Sitting Bull: The Years in Canada* by Grant MacEwan, and *Sitting Bull's Boss: Above the Medicine Line with James Morrow Walsh* by Ian Anderson all deal with Chief Sitting Bull's experiences in Canada, but none of them expand their view beyond this. Although scholars have examined the history of the Lakota who returned to the United States, the 250 people who stayed in Canada after 1881 have been largely ignored. Two of the best and most recent investigations of the Lakota in Canada have been done by scholars David G. McCrady and Ron Rivard and Catherine Littlejohn who examined the relationship between the Métis and the Lakota in the Wood Mountain area, although most of their investigations center on history prior to 1881. Both books by McCrady and Littlejohn and Rivard show the relationship beyond conflict to include aspects like trade and even marriages.⁹ This study will not provide an in-depth examination of the relations of the Métis and the Lakota at Wood Mountain because of the previously mentioned scholars' studies on the topic. This thesis strives to go beyond the history of great men and the years Chief Sitting Bull was in Canada to share the voices of those Lakota people who made Canada their home.

Wood Mountain is located in south-central Saskatchewan about 25 miles (40 kilometers) north of the Canada-U.S. border. Many different Aboriginal nations lived in the Wood Mountain area over the centuries, including the Cree, Dakota, Assiniboiné (or Nakota), and Blackfoot. The Wood Mountain area was also used by Métis families from Red River, Manitoba as a wintering settlement for buffalo hunting and gradually it became a permanent Métis community in the 1870s.¹⁰ The name "Wood Mountain" comes from the Métis name for the place "Montagne de Bois." In June 1874 the Boundary Commission built a depot and storehouses at Wood Mountain as they surveyed the international border, and the North West Mounted Police used these

⁸ Leo J. Omani, "Perspectives of Saskatchewan Dakota/Lakota Elders on the Treaty Process within Canada" (PhD diss., University of Saskatchewan, 2010); and David G. McCrady, *Living with Strangers: The Nineteenth-Century Sioux in the Canadian-American Borderlands* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006).

⁹ David G. McCrady, "The Lakotas and Métis at Wood Mountain, 1876-1881," in *Living with Strangers: The Nineteenth-Century Sioux and the Canadian-American Borderlands* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010); Ron Rivard and Catherine Littlejohn, *The History of the Métis of Willow Bunch* (Saskatoon: R. Rivard, 2003).

¹⁰ Gail Paul Armstrong, "The Métis," in *Wood Mountain Uplands: From the Big Muddy to the Frenchman River*, ed. Thelma Poirier (Wood Mountain, SK: Wood Mountain Historical Society, 2000), 20-21.

buildings during the March West the same year.¹¹ In August of 1874, Commissioner George A. French bought the Boundary Commission depot at Wood Mountain and assigned two sub-constables to the new NWMP post there to control the whiskey trade, but the post was closed a year later.¹² The Wood Mountain NWMP Post was reopened in 1877 to monitor the Lakota in the area and the border.¹³ A small town grew up near the post and later in 1930 it was moved about 3 miles north where the railroad went through. Later, the Lakota reserve was also created between the new town of Wood Mountain and the old NWMP post, called Wood Mountain Lakota First Nation.

Although the Lakota population who stayed in Canada after 1881 was relatively small compared to other Aboriginal populations historically and at present, their history is distinct and of great importance. The population of the Wood Mountain Lakota First Nation today is still small, with only 17 people living on the reserve as of 2006¹⁴ and about 200 band members as of 2003.¹⁵ It is more difficult to calculate the number of Lakota people who live off reserve in the Wood Mountain area, but with the whole Rural Municipality of Old Post No. 43 (the immediate area around the village of Wood Mountain) having a population of 394 people (in 2006), the Lakota population off reserve is still small.¹⁶

The Wood Mountain area is known for its hills, which make up part of the Wood Mountain Uplands. The Uplands are the second highest elevation in Saskatchewan after the Cypress Hills, and are a mixed and short prairie grassland with treed valleys and creeks feeding into the Missouri and Milk Rivers to the south and Old Wives Lake to the north. Much of the Wood Mountain area was not suitable for farming because of the hilly terrain, and so the landscape was more conducive to ranching. Grazing land was open range native grass that eventually shifted to fenced land owned or leased by ranchers. Large ranching companies such as

¹¹ Thelma Poirier, "The North-West Mounted Police," in *Wood Mountain Uplands: From the Big Muddy to the Frenchman River*, ed. Thelma Poirier (Wood Mountain, SK: Wood Mountain Historical Society, 2000), 49-50.

¹² Ibid, 51.

¹³ Ibid, 52.

¹⁴ Statistics Canada, 2006 Community Profiles: Wood Mountain 160, accessed December 3rd, 2012, <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/prof/92-591/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=4703801&Geo2=PR&Code2=47&Data=Count&SearchText=Wood%20Mountain&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&Custom=>.

¹⁵ Government of Canada, Aboriginal Canada Portal, First Nation Connectivity Profile 2003, accessed December 3rd, 2012, http://www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca/abdt/apps/connectivitysurvey.nsf/vAllCProfile_en/725.html.

¹⁶ Statistics Canada, 2006 Community Profiles: Old Post No. 43, accessed December 3rd, 2012, <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/prof/92-591/details/Page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=4703011&Geo2=PR&Code2=47&Data=Count&SearchText=Wood%20Mountain&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&Custom=>.

the 76 Ranch and the N Bar N (N-N) Ranch used the open range in the Wood Mountain area to graze thousands of head of cattle before the hard winter or “Big Die Up” of 1886-1887.¹⁷ After the large ranches pulled out, smaller family-owned ranches were established and horses, rather than cattle, were the primary livestock raised by these ranchers before the First World War.

The terms cowboy and/or cowgirl refer to men and women who work for ranchers carrying out chores such as herding, branding, protecting, feeding, and treating livestock, and fencing. Later with the start of rodeos, cowboy and cowgirl came to also refer to men and women who competed in the rodeo events or worked in various positions for the rodeo such as judges and announcers. To simplify terms, often “cowboy lifestyle” will be used throughout this thesis to describe the various work and recreational activities that accompanied being a rancher or cowboy/cowgirl. Ranching and cowboy work were conducive to Lakota traditional lifestyles because many Lakota people had horse herds and understood through their cultural worldviews the close connections between animals, the land, and themselves. This allowed for the transition to ranching and the cowboy lifestyle and provided security for some of the Lakota at Wood Mountain in a setting of increasing colonial pressures. The Lakota word, *Lakotapteole* translates as a Lakota person who searches for or looks after cattle, or a Lakota cowboy/cowgirl, and this word reflects the blending of Lakota traditions with cowboy lifestyles.¹⁸

Strangely, people have long viewed Aboriginal cultures as a set of values, rituals, and appearances that remained constant in the past and that need to be “relived” in the present as if these cultures and therefore “authentic Indian people” do not exist today. This approach ignores Aboriginal people’s abilities to resist, adapt, and survive and therefore their agency, interactions, and experiences. Cultures always change as the people who live those cultures change. Aboriginal peoples have always been innovative and open to integrating what they want from others while still retaining their own distinct identities, nations, and sovereignties. This is not a new process and is not confined to only a time after European contact. Cultural features—whether values, traditions, or worldviews—do not form in isolation, and as historian Peter Iverson wrote, it does not matter where the cultural features come from, “What matters is how

¹⁷ Marjorie Mason and Thelma Poirier, “Ranching” in *Wood Mountain Uplands: From the Big Muddy to the Frenchman River*, 86-88.

¹⁸ Thank you to Dr. Darlene St. Clair (St. Cloud State University) and Dr. Craig Howe (Center for American Indian Research and Native Studies) for providing me with a sufficient Lakota language translation of “Lakota cowboy”.

the people perceive and define them.”¹⁹ One of the most influential cultural adaptations for the Lakota people (and for many other plains First Nations) was the introduction of horses. The Lakota people integrated horses into their culture readily and eventually viewed themselves as a horse nation. The Lakota came into contact with horses later than other Plains First Nations, around 1760 to 1765,²⁰ but by the 1780s and 1790s they were establishing themselves west of the Missouri River because of their effectiveness in using horses for warfare, hunting, and traveling.²¹ For the Lakota, the horse became a central cultural element, found in many winter counts, oral histories, and ceremonies. Oglala holy man, Black Elk, described the Lakota horse dance ceremony²² and although horses were no doubt part of Lakota ceremonies and spirituality, no direct evidence has been found of these horse-centered ceremonies at Wood Mountain in this study, although more research needs to be done in this area to find evidence that may exist. For the Wood Mountain Lakota, the centrality of the horse was most important in cultural ways of mobility, but also economic and political cultural traditions such as hunting, the accumulation of wealth, and social status which helped transition the Lakota people into cowboy and ranching lifestyles at Wood Mountain.

This thesis explores how ranching and rodeo not only gave the Lakota people at Wood Mountain a viable economic lifestyle but a lifestyle that was culturally and socially fulfilling. And furthermore, from this came the motivation and ability to build a Lakota community and identity that was at once distinct yet interactive with the non-Aboriginal ranching society/lifestyle in the Wood Mountain area. Iverson’s work on Native American involvement in cattle ranching on the Great Plains analyzed similar experiences among many different American tribes:

In the nineteenth century, Indian cattle ranching fully emerged as a strategy to confront changing times. It became part of the tradition of many western Indian communities. While the outcome of this transition can be analyzed in economic terms, the importance of this pastime must be seen as well in a social and cultural context. Just as later

¹⁹ Peter Iverson, *When Indians Became Cowboys: Native Peoples and Cattle Ranching in the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 14.

²⁰ John C. Ewers, *The Horse in Blackfoot Culture*, (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin #159), 5, quoted in Alan M. Klein, “The Political-Economy of Gender: A 19th Century Plains Indian Case Study,” in *The Hidden Half: Studies of Plains Indian Women*, edited by Patricia Albers and Beatrice Medicine (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1983), 147.

²¹ Pekka Hämäläinen, “The Rise and Fall of Plains Indian Horse Cultures,” *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 90, no. 3 (December 2003): 859-860.

²² Black Elk, *Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux*, As Told Through John G. Neihardt (Flaming Rainbow), (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961), 162-176.

observers would be ill-advised to dissect the value placed on cattle ranching by non-Indian ranchers strictly on the basis of dollars and cents, the same perception should be applied to the gradual adoption of cattle ranching by Indians. Cattle ranching could contribute to tribal identity and individual self-esteem. Cattle ranching emerged, therefore, as a symbol for a new day.”²³

For the Lakota people the opportunity of cowboy lifestyles and work allowed them to maintain their culture while adapting to settler societies, which was the means to survive in Canada. Of course this does not mean that there was not hardship, or a range of experiences. On the whole, ranching and related work was difficult and often unpredictable, especially in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Not all the Lakota people at Wood Mountain were participating in ranching and rodeo, but a significant portion of the Wood Mountain Lakota people were in one form or another. Some people were working seasonally building fences for ranchers while others had their own horse and cattle herds with registered brands. This study argues that the Lakota of Wood Mountain blended traditional Lakota culture with cowboy lifestyles that allowed for the adaptation to and interaction with non-Aboriginal society, the retention of traditional Lakota cultural aspects, and the reshaping of identities and communities around this blending process. The Wood Mountain Lakota built identities and communities that allowed them to bridge their traditional Lakota culture and the introduced ranching and rodeo lifestyles which additionally allowed the Lakota people to belong to many spaces—the Lakota, settler, ranching, rodeo, on and off reserve, and masculine and feminine spheres—at once.

The Wood Mountain Lakota community prior to 1930 was inclusive and included Lakota people that were of mixed Lakota and white ancestry (such as the Ogle, Thomson, and Brown families), those that did not reside at Wood Mountain continually (for example, those that moved to larger centers like Moose Jaw and Regina to work or those who lived in the U.S. after the 1920s but still returned to Wood Mountain occasionally), and after the creation of the reserve those that lived both on and off the reserve. The Indian Act was arbitrarily enforced on the Lakota as the Department of Indian Affairs saw fit mostly on a case by case basis as issues the department felt they needed to deal with arose, but as later issues around band membership and Indian Status were enforced with the creation of the reserve (although mostly following the ratification of the reserve in 1930) more strict and inflexible rules to Lakota community membership were produced. This of course defined the Lakota community in different ways

²³ Peter Iverson, *When Indians Became Cowboys*, 14.

based on government categories and not on Lakota cultural understandings. Throughout the large portion of the time examined in this thesis, it was Lakota people and their cultural understandings that defined their community in ways that were more fluid and flexible based on kinship.

Studying the Wood Mountain Lakota's ranching and rodeo activities helps confront the stereotypical and persistent dichotomy of "cowboys versus Indians." This dichotomy damages Aboriginal people's endeavors in ranching and rodeo because it depicts Aboriginal people as being in opposition to non-Aboriginal agricultural activities (especially ranching and rodeo) and reinforces the stereotypes of white only cowboys and interactions limited to conflict. The "cowboys versus Indians" dichotomy does not allow Aboriginal people to be part of ranching, cowboy work, or rodeos when in reality Aboriginal people have been participating and using these activities with their own understandings for generations.

Scholars Peter Iverson, Mary-Ellen Kelm, and Allison Fuss Mellis have done a great job of investigating the link between Aboriginal cultures and their participation in ranching and rodeo in both Canada and the U.S. These scholars start their investigations after the reservation/reserve period in the U.S. and Canada, usually from the 1880s or 1890s to as recent as the 1990s. This thesis differs from these studies because it examines a unique period in Aboriginal history when the Lakota people were ranching and participating in rodeo before they had a reserve and did not become involved in agriculture because of treaties, government policies, or assimilation attempts. However, all these scholars' works emphasize how ranching and rodeo was an outlet for Aboriginal people to retain their traditional ways and understandings and adapt to the increasingly settler populated West and government pressures.²⁴ These interpretations are useful in understanding how the experiences of the Lakota at Wood Mountain were distinct but not isolated and that other Aboriginal people in North America found ranching and rodeo to be beneficial in similar ways. These works show that my research has broader implications and that Aboriginal ranching and rodeo is not completely uncommon on the Great Plains.

Both men and women's perspectives and experiences were used in order to offer a more complete understanding of the community as a whole, especially since agriculture is usually

²⁴ Allison Fuss Mellis, *Riding Buffaloes and Broncos: Rodeo and Native Traditions in the Northern Great Plains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003), 4; Peter Iverson, *When Indians Became Cowboys*, 12-14; Mary-Ellen Kelm, *A Wilder West: Rodeo in Western Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011), 217-226.

understood from men's perspectives. Lakota women had a level of autonomy in their traditional culture and they were able to retain this in ranching- and rodeo-related activities. Historian Mary-Ellen Kelm's book, *A Wilder West* focuses on Aboriginal involvement in Canada in rodeos and how rodeo plays into and challenges racialized and gendered discourses. Kelm also discusses ideas of femininity and masculinity around rodeo and relates them to Aboriginal people who participate in rodeos. She states that rodeo "downplayed racialization in favour of a professional identity highlighting masculinity" and that the rodeo community "defined femininity as including both competence around horses and stock and the mental, emotional, and physical toughness required to flourish in the pro-rodeo world."²⁵ Although Kelm is referring to the pro-rodeo realm, this applies to the more generalized ranching and rodeo sphere as well. Concepts of masculinity and femininity in the ranching and rodeo context as Kelm has pointed out show how men and women can cross Western concepts of gendered roles in order to contribute to their communities and families.

Oral interviews were conducted as part of the research in order to gain understandings of the Wood Mountain Lakota history from their own perspectives. Examining where oral and archival sources converge and diverge allowed conclusions to be drawn about the motivations and experiences of the Lakota people at Wood Mountain. Specifically, examining the sources for the Lakota people's perspectives and experiences illuminated their contributions to the survival of their families and the establishment of the Lakota community at Wood Mountain.

It should be noted that the Lakota experience of settling permanently in Canada is not one that is confined to regional or provincial importance and history, but is a phenomenon that also occurred with other Aboriginal nations such as the Nez Perce and Sinixt people, some of whom also stayed permanently in Canada. As such, this study contributes to the growing scholarship on borderlands and the decisions First Nations people took as they struggled to balance adapting to new situations and preserving culture in their individual and collective lives. As discussed above as well, it is clear that the Lakota at Wood Mountain were not the only Aboriginal people to take up ranching, to become cowboys and cowgirls, or to participate in rodeos. Therefore, my research could be a model for examining other communities where ranching and rodeo were prevalent activities for Aboriginal people.

My thesis topic is especially close to myself, not just as the primary researcher but also as

²⁵ Mary-Ellen Kelm, *A Wilder West: Rodeo in Western Canada*, 13-14.

a person of Lakota ancestry from the Wood Mountain area. Studying some of my family and community history may be viewed as raising a problem of objectivity by some academics, however I do not consider myself a complete “insider” and my research followed the same ethical and analytical considerations as outsider research. Since my family has never lived on the reserve nor had band membership, I do not claim to know or relate to all the experiences of Lakota people at Wood Mountain.

The issues around “insider” and “outsider” research have long been debated. In his dissertation, Leo J. Omani dealt with the topic thoroughly, specifically as it applied to him as a Dakota person researching Dakota/Lakota perspectives. He concluded:

The time has now come for Aboriginal scholars to begin to assist our First Nations in reclaiming our history, identity and ways of knowing for the betterment of mankind. One of the ways to achieve this is having our academic work published, which is why I am pursuing the highest educational credential. For I am proud to be a Dakota person from Wahpeton and I want to tell the world what our Dakota people have encountered, how we have survived, what we have learned and what our experience can offer for the betterment of mankind. By combining Western and Aboriginal ways of knowing, I hope to demonstrate how social science research conducted in a respectful matter can produce positive results in the advancement of self-determination for the benefit of the Dakota/Lakota people residing within the province of Saskatchewan, Canada and for all of mankind.²⁶

I find Omani’s perspective on “insider” Aboriginal research to be insightful and influential because he recognized the need for Aboriginal scholars working within Aboriginal communities to carry out research done from Western and Indigenous understandings. I strive to carry out my research in a manner that is both respectful and rigorous so that it may benefit the Wood Mountain Lakota community and advance needs they may have that historical research can contribute to. I am also proud of my heritage and community, and I want my work to reflect that. Omani continued: “Lastly, but not least, I posed the question to Western Academia. Isn’t all research ‘Insider research’? To answer the question posed, I being of Dakota ancestry, take the view that it is, for this literature review has verified that all data generated, be this though the traditional ‘Rankean approach’ (Norton, 1994, p.438; as cited in Stevenson 2000, p.45), ‘empiricism and intuition’ (Omani, 1992, p. 137) are all cultural constructs and are influenced, either consciously or unconsciously, by the cultural assumptions of the researchers and

²⁶ Leo J. Omani, “Perspectives of Saskatchewan Dakota/Lakota Elders on the Treaty Process within Canada,” 46.

authors.”²⁷ Omani’s thoughts on research always being done with the influences of cultures are provocative and should be taken into consideration no matter the researcher’s relationship to the research matter.

I hope this research will help the Lakota people at Wood Mountain have a stronger voice in the historical literature and in Canada today. For the most part, the Wood Mountain Lakota are still ignored by the Canadian government, especially when it comes to the Lakotas’ efforts to enter into a treaty relationship with the government. Awareness of the Lakota people’s history in Canada could help dispel the myth of Aboriginal people as dependent on the benevolent Canadian government by showing Lakota contributions to the Wood Mountain community and their efforts to survive as Lakota people.

This thesis is structured chronologically to examine the processes of transition and retention Wood Mountain Lakota people undertook from 1880 to 1930. The first chapter investigates the establishment of Lakota ranching from 1880-1894. This chapter will discuss mostly horse ranching (which was dominant at the time at Wood Mountain), the marriages of some Lakota women to non-Lakota men in the Wood Mountain area, and the beginning of the Wood Mountain Stampede. The Wood Mountain Stampede is an excellent example of visual and public ways the Lakota people were blending their traditional culture with ranching and rodeo and interacting with the wider Wood Mountain community. The second chapter focuses on 1895-1914, encompassing how Lakota men and women were interacting not just within their own Lakota community but also with the wider settler community at Wood Mountain through ranching and cowboy-related activities. These interactions will be analyzed to understand Lakota contributions to the overall Wood Mountain community and how their blending of traditional culture and “cowboy culture” affected their interactions and identities. The third chapter explores 1915-1930 from the First World War to the beginning of the Depression, including the shift from horse to cattle ranching. This period also includes some of the second-generation Lakota people’s experiences as they started their own agricultural and cultural endeavors.

²⁷ Leo J. Omani, “Perspectives of Saskatchewan Dakota/Lakota Elders on the Treaty Process within Canada,” 48.

Chapter One: “No time to cry”:

Establishment of the Lakota at Wood Mountain, 1880-1894

During the difficult times between 1880 and 1894 amidst increasing white settlement, the Lakota people were establishing themselves at Wood Mountain but managed to do so in ways that maintained their autonomy and avoided federal government control and confinement. During these years, many Lakota families moved seasonally between Wood Mountain and Moose Jaw to the north. Other Lakota people found seasonal work centered on their knowledge of horses and other traditional skills at Wood Mountain. Several Lakota women married white settlers and North West Mounted Police (NWMP) members, thereby ensuring their security and remaining independent. The Wood Mountain Stampede, a local rodeo, also began in 1890 and became an outlet for Lakota public cultural expression. Because Lakota people retained their horse herds, mobility, and hunting during this transitional period, they were able to retain the principal forms of traditional lifestyles and culture, while blending these things into their new endeavors of ranching and rodeo. Between 1880 and 1894, Lakota people at Wood Mountain exercised their autonomy and explored ways to remain in the Wood Mountain area and preserve important cultural aspects. Because of their independence and mobility they were able to resist government interference in their lives and eventually their involvement in ranching and rodeo provided the avenues to continue traditions, maintain autonomy, and transition to living with settler society at Wood Mountain while securing cultural and physical security.

After Chief Sitting Bull and most of the Lakota returned to the U.S. in 1881, about fifty lodges of Lakota people remained in the Wood Mountain area.¹ These Lakota people subsisted by hunting and gathering much as they had prior to Chief Sitting Bull's departure. Hunger, especially in the hard winters, was a continuing worry, particularly with the decreasing and eventual disappearance of the bison herds north of the international border by 1880. Reports to the Department of Indian Affairs in the late 1880s explain how the Lakota were living in old and worn cotton tents with clothing in similar dreadful conditions² and that the Lakota were battling sicknesses, especially respiratory problems, to the point that some were spitting blood.³ Between 1880 and 1882, several Lakota women married North West Mounted Police members at Wood

¹ John Peter Turner, *The North-West Mounted Police, 1873-1893* (Ottawa: E. Cloutier, King's Printer, 1950), 267.

² Library and Archives Canada (LAC), RG 10, Vol. 3652, File 8589, Pt. 2, Microfilm C10114, John Taylor, Report to the Indian Commissioner, January 18, 1887.

³ LAC, RG 10, Vol. 3599, File 1564, Pt. A, Reverend Nicolls, Report to the Assistant of the Indian Commissioner, Moose Jaw, April 1, 1889.

Mountain, probably to ensure that they would have access to food and shelter for themselves and their families. At the time there were few to no non-Native women in the area, and so for the NWMP men, these Lakota women would have been the likely choice for wives.

The first reference to one of these marriages comes from John Lecaine/Okute-Sica, a Wood Mountain Lakota man sometimes called the first historian for the Wood Mountain Lakota, who wrote many stories based on information from his Lakota elders. Okute-Sica writes that a Lakota woman, Iteskawin (White Face) married Major Jarvis of the NWMP at Wood Mountain sometime between 1880 and 1882.⁴ He noted that Major Jarvis was the first non-Native man in the area to take a Lakota wife and that several other Lakota women agreed to become the wives of NWMP members “at the height of the starvation.”⁵ Okute-Sica also wrote that Iteskawin agreed to marry Major Jarvis because he promised to feed her brothers and sister twice a day.⁶ From this re-telling of Major Jarvis and Iteskawin’s marriage, it is clear that having their physical needs met was a motivating factor for the Lakota women who formed unions with white men at Wood Mountain. In John Okute-Sica’s story of this union, Jarvis publicly embarrassed Iteskawin when he half-dragged her from a Lakota dance after another man kissed her, as was the custom of the dance.⁷ Iteskawin pulled a knife on him to protect herself after Jarvis threw her to the ground twice as he took her home, and then in the night she fled and ended their marriage.⁸ These actions demonstrate Iteskawin’s continued ideas of women’s relative power in marriages, especially their ability to end their marriages.⁹ Her behavior no doubt stemmed from a Lakota

⁴ Saskatchewan Archives Board (SAB), R-834, 17(b), Legends, 1970-1973, Okute-Sica, John. Letter from Everett Baker to John Okute-Sica, September 10, 1957. Research into this story by Thelma Poirier and Bonnie Day shows that there are two men stationed at Wood Mountain named Jarvis who would probably not have been married to a Lakota woman however. They show that William Drummond Jarvis and E.W. Jarvis (both superintendents) were not at Wood Mountain during this time. Furthermore, earlier letters that exist in the Saskatchewan Archives Board by John Lecaine suggest that Iteskawin was married to Major James M. Walsh. As Poirier and Day point out, there is some evidence that Walsh had a Lakota woman living with him, but this is still unclear. William Lethbridge also investigated the story and came to the conclusion that Iteskawin’s husband could have been a member named McDonnell, who was posted at Wood Mountain soon after the Lakota arrived and remained there for ten years. It is still unknown who Iteskawin’s husband was. This information is from Thelma Poirier and Bonnie Day’s manuscript on Wood Mountain Lakota history, 1997.

⁵ SAB, R-834, 17(b), Legends, 1970-1973, Okute-Sica, John, "Iyeskawin: A romance of Major Jarvis of the NWMP and the Iteskawin Sioux Maiden of Wood Mountain," 3.

⁶ SAB, R-834, 17(b), Legends, 1970-1973, Okute-Sica, John, "Iyeskawin: A romance of Major Jarvis of the NWMP and the Iteskawin Sioux Maiden of Wood Mountain," 3.

⁷ Ibid., 7-10.

⁸ Ibid, 7.

⁹ James R. Walker, *Lakota Society* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 42.

worldview as well as the continuation of Lakota social traditions illustrated in the dance Iteskawin and Jarvis attended.

In about 1881, Tasunke Nupawin (Owns Two Horses) also entered into a relationship with Archibald (Archie) Lecaine, a NWMP member at Wood Mountain. According to one account, when Tasunke Nupawin was thirteen, her father Zuya Tehedin (Loves War) convinced her to live with Archie Lecaine so that he could support her and her family.¹⁰ Tasunke Nupawin then became known as Emma Lecaine. The beginning of this union also demonstrates the importance of individual and family security for the Lakota people through marriage and kinship. When Archie Lecaine was eventually transferred to Regina, Emma and their daughter Alice remained at Wood Mountain,¹¹ thus ending the relationship. In 1888 or 1889 Emma married a Lakota man, Okute Sica (Hard to Shoot),¹² and they had their first child together in 1890, John Lecaine/Okute (Woonkapi Sni).¹³ Either Emma decided to stay at Wood Mountain or her father would not let her leave,¹⁴ but both cases show the importance of kinship and community among the Lakota people of Wood Mountain.

Two other NWMP members who were assigned to Wood Mountain, Frederick (Fred) Brown and James Harkin



Figure 1: James Harkin (Jimmy) Thomson in NWMP uniform, n.d. [Wood Mountain Historical Society, Photo No. 0804]

¹⁰ Canadian Museum of History (CMH, formerly Canadian Museum of Civilization), *Legends of Our Times*, “Ranching, Wood Mountain Biographies,” “Tasunke Nupawin (Owns Two Horses-Emma Lecaine),” accessed February 2nd, 2014, http://www.civilization.ca/cmc/exhibitions/aborig/rodeo/biography_14e.shtml#Tasunke

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid; and Moose Jaw Public Library Archives, Sioux Indians, “Indians of Moose Jaw, Emma” by George LeCaine, son of Emma Lecaine, January 17, 1969 and “Indians of Moose Jaw, Big Joe” by George LeCaine, nephew of Big Joe, January 17, 1969.

¹³ CMH, *Legends of Our Times*, “Ranching, Wood Mountain Biographies,” “Woonkapi Sni (John Lecaine/John Okute),” accessed February 11th, 2014, http://www.historymuseum.ca/cmc/exhibitions/aborig/rodeo/biography_16e.shtml#Woonkapi-Sni.

John Lecaine/Okute and his siblings were registered at Wood Mountain under their mother’s first husband’s name, Lecaine, but later in life he began to use his father’s first name, Okute or Okute-Sica, as his last name as well. He therefore went by all these variations, especially in the written work he authored. Today there are still people from this family that go by both Lecaine and Okute. For simplicity, this study will use the surname Lecaine to mean all people of this family who go by the last name Lecaine or Okute or Okute-Sica (not to be confused with John Lecaine’s father Okute-Sica who only went by his Lakota name).

¹⁴ CMH, *Legends of Our Times*, “Ranching, Wood Mountain Biographies,” “Tasunke Nupawin (Owns Two Horses-Emma Lecaine),” accessed February 2nd, 2014, http://www.civilization.ca/cmc/exhibitions/aborig/rodeo/biography_14e.shtml#Tasunke

(J.H.) Thomson, also married Lakota women in the early 1880s. No documentation can be found to show precisely when Fred Brown and Tiopa began their relationship, but in 1883 they had their first son, Billy Brown.¹⁵ In 1881 Brown left the NWMP and worked at various jobs around Moose Jaw until 1885, at which time Brown and Tiopa had another child, Nellie, while living at Moose Jaw in 1881.¹⁶ It is possible that Fred Brown and Tiopa were married and by the time they were living at Moose Jaw. By 1888, when Tiopa and Fred Brown moved to Wood Mountain and lived just east of the NWMP post, they had two more children, Nellie and Alfred.¹⁷ In 1894 their son Albert (known as Soak) was also born.¹⁸ Fred and Tiopa would have two more children, Lawrence/Alonzo (known as Toto) and Nora.¹⁹ J.H. Thomson married Iha Wastewin (Good Laughing Woman) in 1882²⁰ and on June 24, 1884 their first son John (Otakuepa/Hoksila) was born.²¹ On December 23, 1886 James Jr was born; on March 22, 1889 another son, Percy came into the world; and their first daughter, Nellie, was born on March 22, 1893.²² Iha Wastewin became known also as Alice or Mary Thomson. Mary and James Thomson lived near the NWMP post the rest of their lives. The Thomsons and Browns would establish ranches and raise their children there, all of whom would become Lakota cowboys and cowgirls as well.

Intermarriages extended beyond NWMP members to other white settlers at Wood Mountain. Around 1890 or 1891, Tasunke Hin Hotewin (Roan Horse) and William Hall Ogle began their marriage. After their marriage, Tasunke Hin Hotewin also became known as Mary Ogle. One account states that Tiopa Brown introduced Tasunke Hin Hotewin and William Hall Ogle in about 1890, and then the couple lived in Montana at the N Bar N ranch bull camp.²³ In

¹⁵ CMH, *Legends of Our Times*, "Ranching, Wood Mountain Biographies," "Tasunke Nupawin (Owns Two Horses-Emma Lecaine)," accessed February 2nd, 2014,

http://www.civilization.ca/cmc/exhibitions/aborig/rodeo/biography_14e.shtml#Tasunke

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ CMH, *Legends of Our Times*, "Ranching, Wood Mountain Biographies," "Tiopa," accessed February 2nd, 2014, http://www.civilization.ca/cmc/exhibitions/aborig/rodeo/biography_21e.shtml#Tiopa; and LAC, RG 31, Statistics Canada, *Canada Census of the Northwest Provinces, 1906*, Saskatchewan, District 12 Assiniboia West, Sub-District No. 3A, Page 1, <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/census/1906/Pages/about-census.aspx>, accessed March 19, 2014.

¹⁸ CMH, *Legends of Our Times*, "Ranching, Wood Mountain Biographies," "Albert Brown (Soak)," accessed February 9th, 2014, http://www.historymuseum.ca/cmc/exhibitions/aborig/rodeo/biography_23e.shtml#Albert-Brown

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Affidavit written by James Harkin Thomson, part of private Thomson collection.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, RG10 Block 1 A195.1-4 Thomson, James File, "Jimmy Thomson."

²³ CMH, *Legends of Our Times*, "Ranching, Wood Mountain Biographies," "Tasunke Hin Hotewin (Roan Horse/Mary Ogle)," January 26th, 2014, http://www.civilization.ca/cmc/exhibitions/aborig/rodeo/biography_33e.shtml#Tasunke-Hin-Hotewin

November 1893 their second son James Ogle was born at Wood Mountain in an adobe house²⁴ north east of the Ogles' homestead.²⁵ William Hall Ogle applied for his homestead on March 5, 1894 at SW-28-4-3-W3, and by May 1894 he and his wife had built a house there and were well on their way to establishing their large horse ranch.²⁶



**Figure 2: William Hall and Mary Ogle's frame and sod houses on their homestead, n.d.
[Wood Mountain Historical Society, Photo No. 0013]**

Wanbli Sunpagewin (Crossed Eagle Quills) married a white land surveyor, Charles Lethbridge, most likely at Regina in the late 1880s or early 1890s.²⁷ Wanbli Sunpagewin also then took the English name of Julia Lethbridge. They lived at Regina for a few years where they had their first son, William Lethbridge, on December 28, 1895.²⁸ Charles Lethbridge moved away and left his family behind in Regina sometime around 1905 when their youngest child, Jim Lethbridge was born.²⁹ After this, Julia and her children moved to Moose Jaw and worked in the town to support her children.

All of these marriages are significant because they are the beginning of the lasting Lakota families at Wood Mountain who would establish the Lakota community there. All these marriages were most likely commenced in an informal/common-law or even possibly Lakota

²⁴ Wood Mountain Historical Society, *They Came to Wood Mountain*, fourth edition (Wood Mountain, SK: Wood Mountain Historical Society, 1995), 57.

²⁵ William (Billy) Ogle, interview by author, August 14, 2013.

²⁶ SAB, Homestead Files, William Hall Ogle Homestead, file # 596325 SW 28-4-3-W3.

²⁷ CMH, *Legends of Our Times*, "Ranching, Wood Mountain Biographies," "Wanbli Sunpagewin (Crossed Eagle Quills/Julia Lethbridge)," accessed February 2nd, 2014, http://www.civilization.ca/cmc/exhibitions/aborig/rodeo/biography_25e.shtml#Wanbli-Sunpagewin

²⁸ Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, "William Lethbridge," Obituary from unknown newspaper, n.d., RG14.F7.4

²⁹ CMH, *Legends of Our Times*, "Ranching, Wood Mountain Biographies," "Mato Luta (Red Bear/Jim Lethbridge)," http://www.historymuseum.ca/cmc/exhibitions/aborig/rodeo/biography_28e.shtml#Mato-Luta, accessed March 5, 2014.

fashion rather than in a Christian or government-recognized legal manner, as there is no evidence of the latter. These marriages demonstrate continuing Lakota concepts and customs around kinship and marriage as well as the complex interactions between the NWMP and the Lakota that both sides found beneficial at least for securing sustenance and marriage partners. John Lecaine/Okute-Sica wrote: “Though the Sioux were in the midst of uncertainty, want and suffering, life went on. There was love, song, laughter and play. There was feasting, marrying and dancing.... There were many social affairs in the Sioux nation—various kinds of dances and games. Every day some kind of social function took place. There was no time to cry.”³⁰ These marriages and John Lecaine’s words show the persistence both physically and culturally of the



Figure 3: Crossed Eagle Quills/Julia Lethbridge with daughter and grandchildren, n.d.
[Wood Mountain Historical Society, Photo No. 0077]

Lakota at Wood Mountain in the early years. The intermarriages also demonstrate the beginning of the melding and blending of Lakota culture with settlers’ ways and society. The women who entered into these unions had to adjust to and learn the ways of their husbands and prairie settler society. Even if their relationships did not last, they still had to adjust in order to provide for themselves and their families, as in Julia Lethbridge’s case. But more

importantly, these women also brought their culture, knowledge, and skills to their marriages and were able to exercise at least some of the power they had known in their traditional society, as shown by the story of Iteskawin. Women like Mary Thomson and Tiopa Brown were skilled midwives who delivered babies throughout the Wood Mountain community. Tiopa was a midwife to Mary Ogle when all of her children were born.³¹ During all the years Mary and James Thomson were married, Mary’s Lakota relatives often lived with them, including her father

³⁰ SAB, R-834, 17(b), Legends, 1970-1973, Okute-Sica, John, "Iyeskawin: A romance of Major Jarvis of the NWMP and the Iteskawin Sioux Maiden of Wood Mountain," 5.

³¹ CMH, *Legends of Our Times*, “Ranching, Wood Mountain Biographies,” “Tiopa,” accessed February 2nd, 2014, http://www.civilization.ca/cmc/exhibitions/aborig/rodeo/biography_21e.shtml#Tiopa

Cetan (Hawk), her two brothers Hawk Good Voice and Capapa, and her nephew Albert Hawk.³² They had Lakota friends who would visit or stay as well, including Long Dog, Crazy Jack, and Mrs. Little Eagle.³³ These women embodied the balance of living in settler and Lakota cultures.

Furthermore, the Lakota women who took English names when they married often show up in historic records with multiple English names. For example, Iha Wastewin/Good Laughing Woman was known both as Alice and Mary Thomson. Certain English names for these women were used throughout this thesis for simplicity. The choice to use certain English names over others for the women was based on the names documented within brand registry records (see Chapter Three) and census records. The changes in their English names suggested that these women did not go by them in their everyday lives and therefore did not stop using their Lakota names and language within their families. Although they were mixed families of Lakota and other descents, the Brown, Ogle, and Thomson children were all given Lakota names and all spoke the Lakota language as well as English. Lakota was probably the primary language used in the homes of these families. The retention of language and Lakota names demonstrates how Lakota women who married NWMP members and settlers were able to continue their own traditions and also pass them on to their children. Although these Lakota women were adjusting to new situations and settler society, especially in their marriages, they did not suddenly conform to Euro-Canadian customs but instead incorporated what they found useful in their lives for survival while still maintaining and passing on important cultural aspects such as language.

The support these Lakota women and their white husbands gave their Lakota kin displays the importance of these marriages not just as a relationship between two individuals, but also a relationship with their families. This stems from the Lakota cultural understanding that a marriage between two people extended into each other's family and so for Lakota people, a reliance on each other for food and survival at least in times of need would be part of the responsibility, knowledge, and bond of good relations. Ella Deloria, a Dakota woman and scholar who was interested in Native American languages and anthropology, explains: "...when

³² Thelma Poirier and Bonnie Day, unpublished manuscript, 1997, 51-52.

³³ Ibid; and Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, Historic Photo Collection, Photo # 1017, "Howard Thomson, Sam East, Jimmy Thomson, Ida Thomson, Mary Thomson, Mrs. Little Eagle, Bully Thomson, and Charles Rucker at Thomson home, 1919."

your blood relatives marry, all their new relatives are yours, too...”³⁴ Deloria gives an excellent description of Lakota kinship relationships and the accompanying roles:

Kinship was the all-important matter. Its demands and dictates for all phases of social life were relentless and exact; but, on the other hand, its privileges and honorings and rewarding prestige were not only tolerable but downright pleasant and desirable for all who conformed. By kinship all Dakota people were held together in a great relationship that was theoretically all-inclusive and co-extensive with the Dakota domain...The most solitary member [of a Dakota community] was sure to have at least one blood relative, no matter how distant, through whose marriage connections he was automatically the relative of a host of people. For, in Dakota society, everyone shared affinal relatives, that is, relatives-through-marriage, with his own relatives-through-blood...One must obey kinship rules; one must be a good relative...to keep the rules imposed by kinship for achieving civility, good manners, and a sense of responsibility toward every individual dealt with.³⁵

These kinship understandings would have guided the marriages between Lakota women and white men at Wood Mountain and help explain the assistance, particularly the food and shelter, these couples gave their Lakota kin and community.

While these women and their families found their physical needs at least met for a short time in their marriages, by 1883 some of the Lakota from Wood Mountain were wintering at Moose Jaw.³⁶ At this time, some Lakota people began a seasonal cycle of moving between Moose Jaw in the winter and Wood Mountain in the summer. The Lakota still largely relied on hunting in the area between Moose Jaw and Wood Mountain, especially hunting the large antelope herds that were there.³⁷ Elder Hartland Goodtrack remembers many of his elders reminiscing about their years of hunting south of Moose Jaw in the summer. That was “the glorious time of their [lives] when they roamed around the hills...,” he recalled.³⁸ Emma Lecaine (Tasunke Nupawin) and Okute Sica for many years in the fall took their family to Medicine Lodge Creek (Rice Creek) to hunt antelope, dry the meat, and occasionally tan the hides.³⁹ These sources show us that the Lakota were successful at relying on traditional means, especially hunting, for at least some of their survival into the 1890s. Furthermore, as Hartland Goodtrack

³⁴ Ella Deloria, *Speaking of Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 26.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 24-25.

³⁶ 1901 Sessional Papers, No. 27, Vol. 35 No. 11, Department of Indian Affairs Annual Reports, Thomas W. Aspdin (farmer in charge), NWT, Assiniboia-Assiniboine Agency, Wolseley, September 6, 1900, “Sioux,” 128.

³⁷ Hartland Goodtrack, interview by author, August 16th, 2013.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ CMH, “Ranching, Wood Mountain Biographies,” “Tasunke Nupawin (Owns Two Horses-Emma Lecaine),” accessed February 2nd, 2014, http://www.civilization.ca/cmc/exhibitions/aborig/rodeo/biography_14e.shtml#Tasunke

shows, the Lakota people enjoyed continuing their traditional lifestyle and the independence that accompanied it.

However, government officials were concerned about Lakota people's hunting and their continued independence. In 1892, Superintendent A.B. Perry of the NWMP, the officer in command at Regina, stated in his annual report that the Lakota "maintain themselves by hunting, chiefly. They kill a great deal of game."⁴⁰ Inspector Macdonell mentioned "they brought, at one time, seventy-two antelope into Wood Mountain post. I know of another instance where one camp killed ninety-nine. Such wholesale slaughter will have its effects."⁴¹ Perry disapproved of the Lakota people's continued hunting practices and he sought a way for the NWMP and federal government to deal with them. Because the Lakota retained their mobility and autonomy government officials thought they would not easily be controlled. Perry also noted in his 1892 annual report: "They have obeyed the laws of the country and lived peaceably. No attempt has been made to place them under control, or confine them on a reserve, and it is probable that if such an attempt were made they would exhibit considerable impatience, and would be difficult to manage."⁴² The Lakota did not want government interference in their lives, and Perry knew they would resist should the government try to exert such control over them. Perry's observations show just how independent and strong the Lakota still were in the 1890s. Perry went on to write: "If the Government of the United States will receive these Indians back and give them the same treatment as the others, it would be greatly to their advantage to send them. Their children are growing up without education, or any training which might help them to earn their living. The general impression is that they would not go back to the states willingly."⁴³ It was apparent that the government and NWMP did not want the responsibility of looking over the Lakota at Moose Jaw and Wood Mountain but did not want to accept or tolerate the Lakota people's continued independence.

The solution officials suggested in the 1890s was that these Lakota return to the U.S. as most followers of Sitting Bull had a decade earlier. It is also clear that the Lakota were not

⁴⁰ 1893 Sessional Papers, No. 15, Vol. 26, No. 9, NWMP, Appendix D, "Annual Report of Superintendent A.B. Perry, Together with those of Inspectors J.A. McGibbon, J.O. Wilson, C. Constantine, D.H. MacPherson, and A.C. Macdonell," NWMP 'B' Division, Regina, 30th Dec, 1892, "Sioux Indians," 50.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² 1893 Sessional Papers, "Annual Report of Superintendent A.B. Perry, Together with those of Inspectors J.A. McGibbon, J.O. Wilson, C. Constantine, D.H. MacPherson, and A.C. Macdonell," 30th Dec, 1892, "Sioux Indians," 50.

⁴³ Ibid.

concerned about the government's wishes and worries, but rather moved as they wish. Some families and individuals did go to the U.S. in the late 1880s and early 1890s to settle on reservations there. However, some people returned to Wood Mountain and Moose Jaw within a year of leaving. For example, in August of 1889 the families of Rising Bear, Seecha (Thigh), and The Lungs went back to the U.S.,⁴⁴ but Thigh and his family returned to Canada the following year.⁴⁵ Late in 1895, three families headed by Aunty, Long Chicken, and Nitaylah went back to the U.S. as well.⁴⁶ By the fall of 1896 Aunty and Long Chicken with several children were back at Wood Mountain from Fort Peck Agency in Montana.⁴⁷ This behavior could illustrate that the Lakota developed an attachment to the Wood Mountain and Moose Jaw areas, the lifestyle, and the community they had established there, so much so that they chose to return to live in Canada rather than in the U.S. Local Wood Mountain historian Thelma Poirier⁴⁸ reasons that Lakota people wanted to stay in Canada because of their strong attachment to Wood Mountain since their relatives were buried at Wood Mountain and many of their children were born and married there.⁴⁹ All of these families were sent to the U.S. mainly through the efforts of the Indian Agent for the Assiniboine Agency, Thomas W. Aspdin, who also reported on the Lakota at Moose Jaw for Indian Affairs. If these families were not given the material goods such as food and blankets from Aspdin, they would not have been able to travel to the U.S. Possibly the Lakota people who went to the U.S. and came back did so with the understanding that they would not stay permanently on reservations in the U.S. as Canadian Indian Affairs officials and Aspdin wanted, but instead only went to visit and return. Poirier speculates that the people who stayed in Canada were younger, had better employment, and more relatives within the band than some of those people who left.⁵⁰ However, this interpretation does not account for the people who returned to Canada after leaving for the U.S., and although it is difficult to tell from the letters between

⁴⁴ LAC, RG 10, Vol. 3652, File 8589 Pt. 2, Microfilm C10114, Hayter Reed to Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, Regina, August 28, 1890.

⁴⁵ Gus Lecaine interview by Thelma Poirier, March 1997.

⁴⁶ LAC, RG 10, Vol. 3599, File 1564, Pt. B, Thomas W. Aspdin to the Indian Commissioner, Regina, December 5, 1896.

⁴⁷ LAC, RG 10, Vol. 3599, File 1564, Pt. B, Thomas W. Aspdin to the Indian Commissioner, Regina, October 17, 1896.

⁴⁸ Local Wood Mountain historian Thelma Poirier is a non-aboriginal person whose family has had close relationships with the Lakota people in both Canada and the U.S. Her publications, interviews, and research with the Wood Mountain Lakota have been the foundation of my thesis, especially since she gave me insights and resources on Wood Mountain Lakota history and relations with the wider community there.

⁴⁹ Thelma Poirier and Bonnie Day, unpublished manuscript, 1997, 45.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 41.

Aspdin and the Indian Affairs Commissioner, Aspdin's superior, it seems that these people were of various ages as well. Poirier also speculates that possibly some of the people who stayed in Canada beyond the 1880s and 1890s had more horses and were aware that if they returned to the U.S. they would have to give up their herds.⁵¹

Some reports from Indian Affairs officials in the 1880s and 1890s argued that the Lakota who moved seasonally between Wood Mountain and Moose Jaw were destitute.⁵² However, other reports such as one by interpreter W.E.A. LeQuesne's showed that the Lakota were independent and did not want government assistance. LeQuesne wrote after a trip to visit the Lakota at Moose Jaw in February of 1887 that they were not destitute and refused to take government handouts, but instead wanted to work.⁵³ He stated that these Lakota live at Moose Jaw and moved between there and Wood Mountain hunting and working. They told him that 500 head of cattle died at Wood Mountain in a snowstorm on January 28th and 29th.⁵⁴ These events show that the Lakota had close connections to Wood Mountain in the winter when they were at Moose Jaw, and possibly that some people were still traveling between the two places even in the cold season.

Inspector C. Constantine of the NWMP in his 1892 letter stated: "It would be advisable to get them [the Lakota] on a Reserve if possible, but they do not like the idea of restraint either on the part of individuals or of the Government...the Indian Commissioner offered them rations to have...They took their ponies out [of the Moose Jaw area] but refused the rations, saying if we accept them we put ourselves in the power of the Government, the same as treaty Indians."⁵⁵ Constantine's report illustrates that the Lakota people thought treaties and reserves went hand-in-hand with government control, and in the post-treaty years on the Canadian prairies this was certainly true. Since some Lakota families were working at Batoche and fought in the 1885 Resistance with the Métis⁵⁶ these Lakota people must have understood and sympathized with the

⁵¹ Thelma Poirier and Bonnie Day, unpublished manuscript, 1997, 45.

⁵² LAC, RG 10, Vol. 3652, File 8589, Pt. 2, Microfilm C10114, John Taylor's report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Regina, January 18, 1887.

⁵³ LAC, RG 10, Vol. 3652, File 8589 Pt. 2, no. 36985, Microfilm C10114, W.E.A. LeQuesne to Asst Commissioner of Indian Affairs, February 4, 1887.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ LAC, RG 18, RCMP, Series A-1, Vol. 84, File: 465-93, Inspector C. Constantine of 'B' Division from Moosomin to Officer Commanding 'B' Division at Regina, July 23, 1892, Sioux Indians Belonging to US, living at Moosejaw and Wood Mountain (I-49708), 1892-1893.

⁵⁶ Some of the Lakota families who worked for Métis people at Batoche included Lean Crow (Kangi Tamaheca) and his wife Anpetu Wastewin (Good Day Woman), Red Bear (Mato Luta) and his wife Tasunka Topa Naunkewin

problems of the Métis and a few Cree and Dakota. Some Lakota people also traveled to Dakota reserves at Fort Qu'Appelle like Standing Buffalo⁵⁷ where they would have witnessed issues the Dakota people were facing. The Lakota were not in isolation and there would have been opportunities for them to see and hear about the conditions and confinement other First Nations were dealing with. On the issue of returning the Lakota to the U.S., Constantine wrote that they did not want to go especially after the 1890 Wounded Knee Massacre perpetrated by American troops on unarmed Lakota people.⁵⁸ The reports from Constantine and LeQuesne illustrate well the Lakota people's desire and ability for continued self-sufficiency, and additionally that they understood what other First Nations were experiencing in Canada and the U.S. Furthermore, these reports echo the Lakota people's strong expressions of how they did not want to be treated as other First Nations were by the Canadian government.

Lakota families were using a variety of means to survive and it was not just the Lakota who moved seasonally between Moose Jaw and Wood Mountain that found work outside of agricultural roles. Fred Brown helped construct the telegraph line (or the Pole Trail as it was known) in 1884/1885 between Moose Jaw and Wood Mountain,⁵⁹ and then he took the job as lineman, checking the telegraph line to make sure it was not damaged or broken.⁶⁰ Brown worked as lineman for sixteen years beginning in 1885, and while he worked at Moose Jaw cooking for the army,⁶¹ he also began ranching at Wood Mountain.⁶² Tiopa and their children

(along with their children, including Wanbli Sun Pagewin who would become known as Julia Lethbridge later in life), and Lean Crow's brothers Tormenting Bear (Mato Wakaesija) and Siyaka. All of these men fought in the 1885 Resistance as well as Black Bull and Kills Twice (Nupa Kikte, known as Big Joe Ferguson) who came from Moose Jaw to fight. Those who survived the battle and were not imprisoned traveled to Moose Jaw to join the rest of the Lakota. William Lethbridge, interviews by Thelma Poirier, 1972-1994.

⁵⁷ Some Lakota people had close relations with the Dakota from Standing Buffalo. For example, Killed the Enemy The Stood Looking (Ayuta Najin Ktewin) married a man from Standing Buffalo, Tom Good Track (Oye Waste) sometime after 1885 when her family (her parents were Lean Crow and Good Day Woman) returned to Moose Jaw from Batoche. CMH, *Legends of Our Times*, "Ranching, Wood Mountain Biographies," "Ayuta Najin Ktewin," http://www.historymuseum.ca/cmc/exhibitions/aborig/rodeo/biography_04e.shtml#Ayuta-Najin-Ktewin, accessed March 1, 2014.

⁵⁸ CMH, "Ranching, Wood Mountain Biographies," "Ayuta Najin Ktewin," http://www.historymuseum.ca/cmc/exhibitions/aborig/rodeo/biography_04e.shtml#Ayuta-Najin-Ktewin, accessed March 1, 2014.

⁵⁹ Wood Mountain Historical Society, *They Came to Wood Mountain*, fourth edition (Wood Mountain, SK: Wood Mountain Historical Society, 1995), 29; and CMH, *Legends of Our Times*, "Ranching, Wood Mountain Biographies," "Tiopa," accessed February 2nd, 2014, http://www.civilization.ca/cmc/exhibitions/aborig/rodeo/biography_21e.shtml#Tiopa

⁶⁰ Wood Mountain Historical Society, *They Came to Wood Mountain*, 29.

⁶¹ CMH, "Ranching, Wood Mountain Biographies," "Tiopa," accessed February 2nd, 2014, http://www.civilization.ca/cmc/exhibitions/aborig/rodeo/biography_21e.shtml#Tiopa

⁶² Ibid.

went where Brown went as he worked between Moose Jaw and Wood Mountain until they settled for good at Wood Mountain to ranch. In 1894, Brown also began delivering the mail to the Wood Mountain Post. Additionally, James Thomson took over the telegraph operator job from Mr. MacDonald in 1891 at Wood Mountain after MacDonald trained him to use it.⁶³ Thomson also operated the post office at Wood Mountain from its opening on August 1st, 1894, and continued to operate it for the next twenty years until he resigned on May 13th, 1914.⁶⁴ Nearly all of James and Mary Thomson's children also learned to operate the telegraph and work at the post office. For Brown and Thomson and their partners, these jobs meant more security for their families, especially before and during their start to ranching, which could have been uncertain times. These jobs also meant that they could provide for their wives' extended families as well as was needed and expected of them.

The transition from a lifestyle that centered on a buffalo hunting culture to one that incorporated the cowboy culture was made possible for the Lakota by the horse. The Lakota people's relationship to and understanding of horses from traditional Lakota culture would facilitate their ability to make a living at Wood Mountain. In traditional Lakota culture and society, horses were not just essential for hunting bison and for personal status and wealth, but also had spiritual importance as suggested by its name *šunka wakan* meaning holy dog.⁶⁵ When the Lakota arrived in Canada, it is estimated that they brought thousands of horses with them. In December of 1876 it was reported that of the Lakota who had crossed into Canada so far and were camped at Wood Mountain there were about 500 men, 1,000 women, and 1,400



Figure 4: Brave Heart with horse ,n.d.
[Wood Mountain Historical Society, Photo
No. 0082]

⁶³ Wood Mountain Historical Society, *They Came to Wood Mountain*, 29.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 29 and 52; and LAC, *Post Offices and Postmasters*, "Wood Mountain," accessed February 4th, 2014, http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/post-offices/001001-119.01-e.php?&isn_id_nbr=11339&interval=24

⁶⁵ Eugene Buechel and Paul Manhart, eds., *Lakota Dictionary: Lakota-English/English-Lakota*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 291 and 333.

Lakota children with 3,500 horses and 30 mules.⁶⁶ However, by 1881, after the difficult winters, disease, and Lakota people returning to the U.S. all impacted the horse herds, there would have been significantly fewer horses. The Lakota who remained in Canada would still have been very dependent on their horses, especially since many people still hunted and moved seasonally to survive. Furthermore, those working for ranchers and farmers also would have needed to supply their own horses in order to find and do the work needed. In the 1890s, horses also assisted in making some of the Lakota stay at Wood Mountain more frequently in their seasonal migrations between Moose Jaw and Wood Mountain. By 1892, the Lakota had over 100 horses at Moose Jaw,⁶⁷ and farmers were complaining about the damage done by the horses.⁶⁸ Thelma Poirier and scholar Bonnie Day speculate that the problem of not being able to restrain their horses may have been part of the reason that the Lakota eventually decided that they wanted their own land.⁶⁹ Many people eventually moved to Wood Mountain all year round to take advantage of the open range to graze their horse herds.

The older generations of Lakota people were generally not very interested in agriculture and cowboy work, and would rather have subsisted by hunting and gathering. Nevertheless, even the older generation of people still used horses for travel and hunting. Some of this older generation also found employment at Wood Mountain with the NWMP as scouts and trackers. Cante Ohitika (Brave Heart) sometimes worked as a scout for the NWMP at both Moose Jaw and Wood Mountain.⁷⁰ Okute-Sica and William (Billy) Bocasse (also spelt as Bokas. His Lakota name was Anokan San Mato/Bear With Grey Sides) also worked as scouts for the NWMP, often tracking stolen horses.⁷¹ Stealing livestock was a problem especially since the international border was so close to Wood Mountain, but this problem created the opportunity for some men to use their traditional knowledge of horses and tracking to get employment.

⁶⁶ Frederick White, Letter to R.W. Scott, Secretary of State, December 31, 1877, quoted in the Commissioners of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, *Opening Up the West: Being the Official Reports to Parliament of the Activities of the Royal North-West Mounted Police Force from 1874-1881* (Toronto: Coles Pub. Co., 1973), 20.

⁶⁷ 1893 Sessional Papers, "Annual Report of Superintendent A.B. Perry, Together with those of Inspectors J.A. McGibbon, J.O. Wilson, C. Constantine, D.H. MacPherson, and A.C. Macdonell" 30th Dec., 1892, "Sioux Indians," 50.

⁶⁸ LAC, Inspector Constantine to Commanding Officer, "B" Division, Moosomin, July 23, 1892.

⁶⁹ Thelma Poirier and Bonnie Day, unpublished manuscript, 1997, 75; and LAC, RG 10, Vol. 3652, File 8589, Pt. 2, James H. Ross letter to Hayter Reed, Moose Jaw, December 8, 1893.

⁷⁰ CMH, "Ranching, Wood Mountain Biographies," "Cante Ohitika (Brave Heart)," accessed February 2nd, 2014, http://www.civilization.ca/cmc/exhibitions/aborig/rodeo/biography_01e.shtml#Cante-Ohitika

⁷¹ SAB, File 190.2 44-ID, John Okute (Lecaine) letter to J.D. Herbert, Wood Mountain, March 28, 1955; and CMH, *Legends of Our Times*, "Ranching, Wood Mountain Biographies" "Okute Sica," accessed February 2nd, 2014, http://www.historymuseum.ca/cmc/exhibitions/aborig/rodeo/biography_15e.shtml#Okute-Sica

The younger generations of Lakota—those who had married or were born since their arrival in Canada—became involved in ranching, farming, and cowboy work. Some men worked both at Moose Jaw and Wood Mountain for farmers and ranchers. After being released from prison in 1886 for his involvement in the 1885 Resistance at Batoche, Kangi Tamaheca (Lean Crow) joined his sons Tasunka Opi (Wounded Horse/ Alex or Alec Wounded Horse) and Paha Onajinkte (Bob Lean Crow), and worked for farmers and ranchers. In the process, they acquired a horse herd of nearly 100 head.⁷² Their large herd helped Alec Wounded Horse begin his own small horse ranching endeavors.

In the early 1890s, several Lakota people and families expanded their horse herds and began selling horses. Many Lakota people's intention was to own horses as they always had, not to keep horse herds for commercial purposes. Some Lakota families started selling horses on a small scale for profit since they had such large herds. However, the Lakota women who had married local Wood Mountain non-Aboriginal men and their families became very involved in horse and cattle ranching at Wood Mountain. Horses were the main livestock raised and sold by early ranchers at Wood Mountain because there was a steady market for them in the homesteaders who were coming west to farm. Some, like the Ogles, raised mainly draft horses to be used for farm work by homesteaders, but others, especially the Lakota people who still continued to move between Moose Jaw and Wood Mountain in the 1890s, sold their own light horses (or ponies as often called in government correspondence) to homesteaders as saddle horses. The horses grazed on the open range and only saddle or workhorses kept at the yards of their owners would have been fed in winter. In the 1880s and 1890s, Wood Mountain was not open to homesteading. Its hills and brush largely made farming difficult, though the terrain was good for ranching. On May 9, 1890, James Thomson reported to *The Times* in Moose Jaw that there was little grain grown around Wood Mountain or Willow Bunch, but what was there looked good.⁷³ Thomson also reported that "the grass is very abundant this year and the cattle and horses are in first class condition" and that 200 Montana horses would be arriving in the Wood Mountain area to "feed on the luxuriant grass on the Canadian side of the line."⁷⁴ Clearly,

⁷² CMH, *Legends of Our Times*, "Ranching, Wood Mountain Biographies," "Kangi Tamaheca (Lean Crow/Kasla)," accessed February 2nd, 2014,

http://www.historymuseum.ca/cmhc/exhibitions/aborig/rodeo/biography_03e.shtml#Kangi-Tamaheca

⁷³ SAB, Microfilm 1.375 Moose Jaw Times: Jan 10, 1890 - April 28, 1893, *The Times*, Moose Jaw, Vol. 2, No. 3, May 9, 1890, "Town and Country" with James Thompson of Wood Mountain Post.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

the Wood Mountain area was thought of as great ranching country, and James Thomson and others soon took advantage of it.

By 1888, Fred Brown was selling and buying horses at Wood Mountain, working with an American partner, Jack Glass. They brought in wild horses from the U.S. and broke them to sell to homesteaders, especially at Moose Jaw.⁷⁵ In 1890, Fred Brown bought 150 head of cattle and expanded his family's ranching operations.⁷⁶ In the early 1890s, James Thomson and another ex-NWMP, Dub Mayne, had cattle shares together.⁷⁷ In 1892, Inspector A.C. Macdonell of the NWMP reported that J.H. Thompson (Thomson) had "a herd of some fifty good sized mares" at Wood Mountain.⁷⁸ As mentioned earlier, Lean Crow and his sons also had acquired many horses from their work for farmers and ranchers by the 1890s, and so they started selling some to homesteaders while maintaining a large main herd until the 1930s.⁷⁹ In 1893, Bocasse also moved his large horse herd to Wood Mountain to stay due to Moose Jaw settlers' complaints that his horses were ruining their crops.⁸⁰ Thomas W. Aspdin reported on December 8, 1893 that Bocasse, Seechah, Big Jim, Broken Leg, and others were living at Wood Mountain and that Bocasse alone had between fifty and seventy-five horses that were causing trouble with settlers' crops at Moose Jaw.⁸¹ Bocasse and his wife, Mahpiya Giwin (Brown Cloud) lived in an adobe house in a deep coulee north of the NWMP post⁸² and from there Bocasse sold horses to homesteaders as well. Lastly, sometime between 1890 and 1894, William Hall and Mary (Tasunke Hin Hotewin) Ogle began ranching at Wood Mountain. As mentioned previously, by March 1894 William had applied for a homestead and in May he and his wife had a house there, so were presumably beginning their ranching enterprises by then. The majority of the Lakota who were involved in ranching on a larger scale at this time were the families of the women who had intermarried with white settlers, but there were significant others like Bocasse. Ranching

⁷⁵ Wood Mountain Historical Society, *They Came to Wood Mountain*, 32-33.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 29.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 24.

⁷⁸ 1893 Sessional Papers, No.15, Vol. 26, No. 9, NWMP, Appendix D, Annual Report of "Inspector A.C. Macdonell," "General," 82.

⁷⁹ Thelma Poirier and Bonnie Day, unpublished manuscript, 1997, 76.

⁸⁰ LAC, RG 10, Vol. 3652, File 8589 Pt. 2, no. 108829, Microfilm C10114, Thomas W. Aspdin to the Indian Commissioner, December 8, 1893; and CMH, *Legends of Our Times*, "Ranching, Wood Mountain Biographies," "Anokan San Mato (Bear with Grey Sides/Bokas)," accessed February 2nd, 2014, http://www.civilization.ca/cmc/exhibitions/aborig/rodeo/biography_02e.shtml#Anokan-San-Mato

⁸¹ LAC, Thomas W. Aspdin to the Indian Commissioner, December 8, 1893.

⁸² CMH, *Legends of Our Times*, "Ranching, Wood Mountain Biographies," "Anokan San Mato (Bear with Grey Sides/Bokas)," accessed February 2nd, 2014, http://www.civilization.ca/cmc/exhibitions/aborig/rodeo/biography_02e.shtml#Anokan-San-Mato

would have taken considerable capital to begin even at this time, and this necessity would have been a barrier to most of the Lakota, although people like Bocasse and Alec Wounded Horse had enough horses to sell some for profit. On top of this, some Lakota people were not interested in becoming ranchers because they would rather live hunting and working for others as they needed. This is especially true of the older generations, and most of the younger generation of Lakota was not old enough to begin their own agricultural pursuits in the 1890s. The 1890s saw an increase in ranching at Wood Mountain, especially horse ranching, and Lakota people definitely were a significant part of this growth, both in establishing the wider Wood Mountain ranching community and to transition into a lifestyle that would support them physically and allow them to continue on their cultural traditions and understandings, particularly around horses.

Aside from survival and work, horses were still a large part of personal pride and recreation as well. One story that Little Eagle (Wanblicicala) told George Lecaine about a horse race at Wood Mountain between Henry Gaudry and John Marie Caplette in the winter of 1884-1885 illustrates the recreational side to horse ownership. At that time there were about 3000 or 4000 First Nations and Métis wintering in the Wood Mountain area⁸³ so a horse race would be well attended by the many Aboriginal people there that winter. Gaudry's horse was a buffalo horse (a horse used for hunting buffalo, particularly because of its speed and sure-footedness) and before the race it got distemper. Some people tried to stop the race, but it went on anyways and Gaudry's horse lost. Lecaine writes that "There was a lot of quarreling about this race and a war just about took place amongst the Indians and the Metis" probably because of the large bets on the race.⁸⁴ The NWMP officers, who also attended the race, took Gaudry's horse and grain fed it for two weeks and had their veterinarian care for it until it was healthy. The race was then run again and Gaudry's horse won. Caplette did not think this was fair, so another race was held and Gaudry's horse won again.⁸⁵

The story of this race reveals some important things about horses and Aboriginal people at Wood Mountain in the 1880s, including the Lakota. This story shows how horse racing and gambling were still enjoyed and carried out for entertainment as would have been traditionally done by the Lakota, Métis, and other Aboriginal peoples. Furthermore, it outlines the interactions

⁸³ Wood Mountain Historical Society, *They Came to Wood Mountain*, 248.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

between First Nations, Métis, and the NWMP, which in this case are positive for the most part. In general the story of the race suggests a sense of cooperation between the First Nations, Métis, and NWMP through their appreciation for horses and entertainment. The story of the horse race is another aspect that helps shed light on the Wood Mountain Lakota people's involvement with horses that would eventually lead to their agricultural endeavors as well as their retention of cultural aspects. This story complicates the standard narrative that exchanges between the Lakota and other Aboriginal people (especially the Métis) were based on their competition for resources and warfare. Furthermore, this story shows interactions between the NWMP and Aboriginal people that go beyond police control of Aboriginal people while following Canadian government policies in the late nineteenth century.

The race between Gaudry and Caplette sets the stage for the Wood Mountain races as they were known in the beginning years of the Wood Mountain Stampede. The Wood Mountain Stampede, which still continues today, began in about 1890, although possibly as early as 1888, as a celebration of Dominion Day in July put on by the NWMP that featured sports, picnics, and horse and foot races.⁸⁶ Aboriginal people, including the Lakota, took part in these events as they did in the 1884-1885 race. The first financial records that exist are from 1894 and include the winners of the horse races. In the quarter-mile pony race, Bocasse's horse Jack came in first and Ogle's (presumably, W.H. Ogle) Brownie came in second.⁸⁷ In the half-mile horse race, Bocasse's Buckskin came in first as well.⁸⁸ For many years following, Bocasse won horse races, attesting to his horsemanship. Unfortunately records for the early years of the races/stampede are not complete, and so it cannot be determined who exactly took part in the years before 1894 and in the late 1890s, but most likely Lakota people took part in almost every Wood Mountain Stampede from its beginning as workers, contestants, and spectators. The rodeo in its early years was probably considered an outlet for the Lakota to exhibit their abilities with horses as well as a time to gather, visit, and feast with friends and family in the summer as the Lakota have always done. The rodeo/races helped further connect the Lakota to the wider Wood Mountain

⁸⁶ LAC, RG 18, Vol. 24, File 665-1888, E.W. Jarvis, monthly report, Wood Mountain, July 1888 quoted in Pat Fitzpatrick, "Chapter Eight: Rodeo," in *Wood Mountain Uplands: From the Big Muddy to the Frenchman River*, ed. Thelma Poirier (Wood Mountain, SK: Wood Mountain Historical Society, 2000), 123.

⁸⁷ Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, Rodeo Binder 1894-1919, Wood Mountain Rodeo "1894", RG26.SG12.F61.2

⁸⁸ Ibid.

community as well though, because the NWMP and few settlers in the area at that time likely viewed the races in the same way.

The establishment of the Lakota community at Wood Mountain occurred mainly through hardship, marriages, seasonal movements, horses, and hunting. All these aspects allowed the Lakota to transition to living alongside settler societies on their own terms in the early years, as seen clearly in their refusal of government assistance or interference, but also to understand the necessity of adaptation in order to survive. Similarly, these things also allowed the Lakota people to retain cultural views and ways, and therefore to blend the transition and retention in a way that was suitable to them as individuals and as a community. The years before 1894 strengthened the Lakota people's connections to Wood Mountain and to the beginnings of their ranching and rodeo activities there.

Chapter Two: “I soon found out how they could be the best of friends”:

Interactions in the Margins of Race, Gender, and Cultures: 1895-1914

Ranching, rodeo, and Wood Mountain in general were contact zones where Lakota men and women belonged to many communities simultaneously. As scholar Mary-Ellen Kelm wrote: “the role [rodeo] played in crafting identities, affinities, and relationships in and between rural and reserve communities, settlers, and Aboriginal people” means that for her study, “rodeo as a contact zone shaped subjects as well as structures.” This is also the case for Wood Mountain Lakota experiences as ranching and rodeo shaped the relations between Lakotas and settlers, the identities and lifestyles that blended Lakota and Euro-Canadian ways and views, and the ability for Lakota people to thrive physically and culturally. Conversely, Lakota people themselves also shaped ranching and rodeo when they attached their worldviews and culture to these activities. This chapter will illustrate how hard and good times brought the Lakota into the wider Wood Mountain community through their diverse experiences with settlers. Some of these hard times brought the Lakota and settler people together and some reinforced Lakota resistance as well as prejudices held by settlers and government officials against the Lakota. Additionally, this chapter will show the good times shared by both groups, especially in horse trading, homesteading as neighbors, and Lakota women working as midwives for some settler women. Through all these social, cultural, and gendered interactions, the Lakota people still retained some independence and cultural traditions (to the annoyance of government officials) and even made demands of the government when they wanted to transition more into agriculture and interact in more ways with settler societies. All these above interactions, through hardships and good times with relative Lakota autonomy, demonstrate Lakota people’s mediation between Lakota and settler worlds that melded into a Wood Mountain Lakota perspective, identity, and culture.

A portion of the Lakota people still frequently moved between Wood Mountain and Moose Jaw, but beginning in 1910, many were settled more permanently within the Wood Mountain area. In 1895, William Lethbridge, Andrew Thomson, and Elizabeth Lecaine were born¹ and all would become part of the Wood Mountain ranching community. When these people were born, times were difficult and food was still hard to come by for some. Phil

¹ Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, RG10 Block 1 A113, Lethbridge, William file, "William Lethbridge"; and Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, RG10 Block 1 A195.1-4, Thomson, James File, "Jimmy Thomson"; and Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, *The Times*, Assiniboia, Tuesday, June 29, 1994, RG10 Block 1 A145.52 Ogle, W.H. File, "Mrs. Lizzie Ogle."

Lethbridge recalled: "It was tough for the native people to adjust to the white man's language and customs. Times were lean and food was scarce. I can remember Dad [William Lethbridge] telling us that when he was young, a white family gave him and his brother Pete some crackers and butter to eat. It tasted so good that he thought someday it would be a treat to be able to buy a big box of soda crackers and a whole pound of butter to eat."² Disease was another obstacle the Lakota faced. Outbreaks of smallpox, and most likely other devastating diseases, were still common even in the early 1900s. In January 1902, Staff Sergeant Watson of Wood Mountain, doctor for the NWMP, wrote to J.D. McLean, Secretary of the Department of Indian Affairs, about whether he could vaccinate the Lakota at Wood Mountain for smallpox since the disease was prevalent.³ Watson's request was approved.⁴ In March 1908, Indian Agent W.S. Grant reported that the Lakota suffered from smallpox the previous summer.⁵ Watson's letter and Grant's report show that smallpox affected the Lakota in this case at least once in six years and other diseases and illnesses were probably also common and reoccurring.

Additionally, Grant reported that the Lakota were unable to acquire much money from the sale of their horses in 1907-1908.⁶ Possibly their horse herds were still recovering from the harsh winter of 1906-1907. That winter "was one to remember...everyone ran short of provisions," one settler, Gerald Hollenback, recalled.⁷ According to Hollenback, the large N-N and Turkey Track ranches both went broke after losing almost all the cattle they had in Canada that winter.⁸ The Canadian ranch company, the 76 Ranch, was very profitable until the 1906-07 winter devastated its herds as well.⁹ After the hard winter, Thigh and two settlers drove two teams of horses to Moose Jaw, and along the way they saw dead cattle strewn everywhere.¹⁰

² Philip Lethbridge, interview by author, July 19th, 2013.

³ Library and Archives Canada (LAC), RG 18 RCMP, Vol. 233, no. 231, J.D. McLean, "Sioux Indians, Wood Mountain District - vaccination of," March 4, 1902.

⁴ LAC, RG 18, RCMP, Vol. 233, no. 231, J.D. McLean, "Sioux Indians, Wood Mountain District - vaccination of," March 5, 1902.

⁵ 1909 Sessional Papers, Department of Indian Affairs, No. 15, Vol. 43, No. 27, Part I, Reports of Superintendents and Agents, W.S. Grant (Indian agent), Province of Saskatchewan, Assiniboine Agency, Sentaluta, March 31, 1908, 117-118.

⁶ 1909 Sessional Papers, W.S. Grant (Indian agent), Province of Saskatchewan, Assiniboine Agency, Sentaluta, March 31, 1908, 117-118.

⁷ Wood Mountain Historical Society, *They Came to Wood Mountain*, fourth edition (Wood Mountain, SK: Wood Mountain Historical Society, 1995), 41.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Don C. McGowan, *Grasslands Settlers*, (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1975), 57-87, quoted in Marjorie Mason and Thelma Poirier, "Chapter Six: Ranching," in *Wood Mountain Uplands: From the Big Muddy to the Frenchman River*, ed. Thelma Poirier (Wood Mountain, SK: Wood Mountain Historical Society, 2000), 86.

¹⁰ Wood Mountain Historical Society, *They Came to Wood Mountain*, 41.

The Lakota people were part of the Wood Mountain community as a whole. The Lakota people were not isolated but on the contrary had diverse interactions with the settlers who were coming to Wood Mountain in larger numbers. One example is the Lakota involvement in the Hoffman children incident. In May 1907, Ruth and Nellie Hoffman were caught in a storm as they tended their family's horses.¹¹ The children could not be found even though the family and neighbors searched days for them. Eight years later, the children's remains were found in a coulee two miles beyond where the search had ended.¹² Today that coulee and creek that runs there is still known as Lost Child Creek. Two stories were written about this sad incident and both versions of the story record that James Thomson arranged a Lakota medicine man to help locate the children.¹³ One account states that the medicine man was A-kik-ta-weah "Looking Backward," and that the children were found,¹⁴ while the other that the medicine man was Long Chicken.¹⁵ Although some of the details differ between the stories and it is impossible to determine the authenticity of the stories, they do offer an account of positive relations between the Lakota and settlers to the point that the Lakota were sought out to help settlers when needed. Interestingly, in Augusta Logan's (nee Hoffman) account of how her siblings went missing, she stated that "An old Indian started a story that they were kidnapped and for a big sum of money he could tell us where they were, but we knew Indians too well to believe that."¹⁶ Some accounts of the story show how the Lakota and settlers cooperated and another illustrates a negative perspective of the Lakota people and "Indians" in general. To say that relations were always positive between Lakota and settlers would be an over-simplification and misconceptions existed from both sides.

However, settlers told many stories of the Lakota people in the Wood Mountain area and many of them were positive. Ernest R. Koester, who homesteaded at Wood Mountain in 1911, in his later years recalled: "I often think back when I first settled here of how uneasy I felt about my Indian neighbors. I soon found out how they could be the best of friends. Amongst those whom I

¹¹ Wood Mountain Historical Society, *They Came to Wood Mountain*, 39.

¹² *Ibid.*, 39-40.

¹³ One version was written by John Lecaine and the other by W.H. Metcalf. The latter version seems to be based on Lecaine's account as there are exact similarities between them, especially in the descriptions of the ceremony. Metcalf's version states that the incident occurred in the summer of 1889 although the Hoffman family was not in the Wood Mountain area at that time (see *They Came to Wood Mountain*, 35-36).

¹⁴ Moose Jaw Library Public Archives, W.H. Metcalf, "A-kik-ta-weah and his Good Medicine," 1-4.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* See chapter one, page 10 for details on Long Chicken.

¹⁶ Wood Mountain Historical Society, *They Came to Wood Mountain*, 39.

learned to know and respect were Alec and John Wounded Horse, Bob Leancrow, Billy Bocasse, Little Eagle, and old Chief Thigh, also some younger men such as Pete Lethbridge and John Okute.”¹⁷ Koester acknowledges that he came with preconceptions about Aboriginal people that made him apprehensive about settling in an area and community with Lakota people, but he soon discovered that he had nothing to be anxious about and became very close to some of them. He also explained how Mary Thomson took care of his wife after his son was born and that her generosity was well known.¹⁸ When another settler, Richard Decock who learnt to speak English after he moved to the Wood Mountain area, reminisced, “he always mentioned his Indian friends with something close to affection. It was obvious that he admired them, for while still learning to master the English language, he became fairly fluent in theirs.”¹⁹ Mrs. Maxine Williams remembered “One Indian mother had success in healing a settler’s newborn baby’s navel. The umbilical cord had been cut too close. The navel was opening and becoming septic. Powder from a puffball, normally considered poison, was applied to the sore until it healed.”²⁰ These mutual exchanges are intriguing considering the Canadian government believed at the time that First Nations people were best left segregated on reserves unless they could lose all their “Indian-ness” in order to integrate into Canadian mainstream society. These testimonies show the exact opposite: Lakota people retained their culture, language, and identity, and the fact that they did so did not hinder their ability to interact and, further yet, make strong relationships with people other than Lakota and participate in the wider Wood Mountain community.

Although the Lakota were becoming more self-sufficient after 1895, Indian Affairs officials still complained about them, especially because some Lakota people would not give up their cultural ways. Indian agent Thomas W. Aspdin wrote in November 1896 that several families who usually stayed at Wood Mountain came to Moose Jaw because fires had burned the Wood Mountain area.²¹ Aspdin commented on those people who were working hard, especially Thigh who he said “has been used to work for Ranchers at Wood Mountain but came in to get medicine for his wife who is sickly- he is also sick himself and although he does not complain he

¹⁷ Wood Mountain Historical Society, *They Came to Wood Mountain*, 55.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 54.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 70.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 274.

²¹ LAC, RG 10, Vol. 3652, File 8589, Pt. 2, Microfilm C10114, Thomas W. Aspdin to Indian Commissioner, November 8, 1896.

looks as if he would not live long.”²² He listed Thigh, Bloody Hands, and Black Bull as needing assistance. Aspdin also stated that the young men had been working for threshers and were careful of their money, but that they needed coats for the coming winter. He wrote that Poor Crow and Long Dog and others should not be given anything because “They take pride in keeping up the worst Indian ways and anything given to them however badly they need it they will persist in giving away at dances and so get into hands it was never intended.”²³ He regarded these people as murderers because of their participation in the 1885 Resistance and therefore he believed they have “abused the right of asylum here.”²⁴ Aspdin apparently thought poorly of the people who still practiced certain customs. In 1914, Indian agent Donnelly reported: “The mode of dress of the men is similar to that of white men, but the women continue to wear the blanket.”²⁵ Both Aspdin and Donnelly’s reports show that the Lakota—not just men but whole family units—were keeping their culture. Clothing and giving away material goods are only two outward expressions of culture that outsiders like Aspdin and Donnelly could identify easily, so no doubt there were other more private and less visible cultural aspects that the Lakota people were also continuing such as spirituality, ceremonies, and domestic practices.²⁶

One of the ways Indian Affairs wanted to “improve” the Lakota as they saw it was to educate the Lakota children in residential schools. The government had been concerned with getting their children to attend residential schools for many years. According to the *Moose Jaw Times*, The first group of Lakota children to go to residential school was made up of the fourteen children who in 1899 went to Regina Industrial School.²⁷ Records from the school do not entirely match this number.²⁸ Included in that group was John Lecaine who attended the school from 1899 to 1906 where he learned some skills in agriculture and carpentry.²⁹ Lakota families’ resistance to their children being taken to residential schools was varied. Elizabeth Ogle (nee Lecaine), who was a child at the time, recalled how Aspdin came with a police escort and

²² LAC, RG 10, Thomas W. Aspdin to Indian Commissioner, November 8, 1896.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ 1915 Sessional Papers, No. 23, Vol. 50, No. 27, Department of Indian Affairs, Part II, Reports of Indian Agents, Thomas E. Donnelly, Indian Agent for Assiniboine Agency, Saskatchewan, “Moosejaw Sioux,” 56.

²⁶ See chapter three for more discussion on the retention of traditional spirituality.

²⁷ SAB, Microfilm S-7.6/5 Moose Jaw Times: December 1898 – December 1899, *Moose Jaw Times*, February 3, 1899.

²⁸ SAB, Regina Industrial School Admission Records, Microfilm R-2.40.

²⁹ CMH, *Legends of Our Times*, “Ranching, Wood Mountain Biographies,” “Woonkapi Sni (John Lecaine/John Okute),” http://www.historymuseum.ca/cmc/exhibitions/aborig/rodeo/biography_16e.shtml#Woonkapi-Sni, accessed March 17, 2014.

“forcibly took many of the children from their homes while the men were away...some of the children tried to hide in the brush near the river [at Moose Jaw], [but] they were found. She remembered the women wailing into the night after the children were gone. When a few years later, it was her turn to go to school, her mother hid her in a trunk, saying the authorities were not going to take away her youngest daughter.”³⁰ When John Lecaine was sixteen years old in 1907 and out of residential school, his father Okute Sica took him on a long horseback journey from west of the Frenchman River Valley to Wood Mountain, showing John all sites that were important to the Lakota, surely to make certain that the knowledge and culture was passed on from father to son. Some of these places included winter camps, sun dance sites, red ochre mines, and burial sites.³¹ Elizabeth Ogle and John Lecaine’s recollections demonstrate the anguish of the residential schools on the Lakota community as well as their resistance to the breaking up of their families and culture. This resistance would only grow within the Lakota people as the government tried to take more children into the schools.

From 1903 to 1906, James, Willie, Dorothy, and Edith Ogle went to Regina Indian Industrial School as well.³² In 1905, William Lethbridge went to school at Lebret Industrial School when he was ten years old after Father Hugonnard visited the Moose Jaw area to convince the Lakota to send their children to his residential school.³³ At Lebret, William was taught academics part of the day and industrial skills the rest of the day, such as gardening, tending to livestock, threshing, tanning leather, blacksmithing, and general agricultural work. Time was also allotted for religious activities and sports. William Lethbridge only attended school up to grade five. When he left in 1911 he was sixteen years old.³⁴ Phil Lethbridge remembered: “Dad spoke favorably about his schooling at Lebret and he was thankful for the education he received there even though he only went up to grade five. I remember at meal times at our place Dad relat[ed] to us some of the lessons taught by Father Hugonnard and some of the stories that he told the boys. We enjoyed Dad telling us about his school days experiences. Maybe he liked school partly because he got to eat on a regular basis.”³⁵ The experiences at residential schools for the Lakota children were varied, some positive, some negative. However,

³⁰ Elizabeth Ogle interviews by Thelma Poirier, 1962-1994, quoted in Thelma Poirier and Bonnie Day, unpublished manuscript, 1997, 43.

³¹ SAB, John Lecaine, Clippings file R560-30N.

³² Wood Mountain Historical Society, *They Came to Wood Mountain*, 57.

³³ Philip Lethbridge, interview by author, July 19th, 2013.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

the Lakota people later became very adamant against sending their children to residential schools because a number of their children died while at the schools.

The federal government had been working for many years to return the Lakota to the U.S. or to settle them on another reserve within Canada. In the 1890s, some officials within the Department of Indian Affairs started to consider setting aside a reserve for the Lakota. In 1895, A. E. Forget (Assistant Commissioner of Indian Affairs) wrote to Hayter Reed (Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs) that the Lakota should be given a small reserve near Wood Mountain because “As regards the removal of this party, either wholly or in part, to a Northern Reserve or to the United States, I am confident that no success need be expected and that the sole desire is to secure a settlement in a locality with which they are familiar.” Forget stated that “I am aware of the objection to placing Indians at points in proximity to the Boundary, but as these people are likely to become industrious farmers and cattle-raisers, if given an opportunity, I do not think any trouble would be given by them wherever they are placed.”³⁶ No immediate action was taken even though Forget and the Department of Indian Affairs recognized the Lakota’s agricultural abilities and potential. At the time, it was Indian Affairs’ practice to remove First Nations as far as possible from the international border, and the only other reserve in Saskatchewan created within close proximity to the border was Nekaneet First Nation in the Cypress Hills in 1913, which is twenty-three miles south-east of Maple Creek.³⁷

Beginning in 1908, Presbyterian minister A.D. Pringle wrote many letters to the Department of Indian Affairs, especially Commissioner David Laird, about the Lakota and the issues of a reserve and homesteading rights for them. Pringle wrote in June of 1909 that not all the Lakota were full-blood Indians, and that they should be granted the right to homestead or given a reserve.³⁸ Pringle stated that they were self supporting and intelligent, but their “development into worthy citizens is hampered terribly by their migratory habits” which he reasoned were due to not being able to homestead.³⁹ He suggested that the Lakota be given a block of 36 sections (one township or 23,040 acres) and he believed the matter should be dealt with right away because there were not many townships left in the Wood Mountain vicinity. He

³⁶ LAC, RG 10, Vol. 3652, File 8589 Pt. 2, Microfilm C10114, A. E. Forget letter to Hayter Reed, Regina, November 2, 1895.

³⁷ File Hills Qu’Appelle Tribal Council, “Nekaneet,” <http://fhqtc.com/member-first-nation/nekaneet/>, accessed March 19, 2014.

³⁸ LAC, RG 10, Vol. 7779, File 27137-1, Reel C12061, Rev. A.D. Pringle to Commissioner of Department of Indian Affairs David Laird, June 27, 1909, Wood Mountain, Saskatchewan.

³⁹ Ibid.

recommended Township 4, Range 4, West of the Third Meridian for the Lakota. Pringle wrote again, this time to the Minister of the Department of the Interior, in August 1909 to express his concern that the land around Wood Mountain would be surveyed completely in the next six months and then opened for homesteading. He was worried that the Lakota would still not be able to homestead or have any land set aside for them once this happened. He stated empathically that “a civil injustice will be committed if these poor Indians are turned out of house and home and become vagrants through not being allowed to become land owners.”⁴⁰ Pringle seems to have understood his request for land being set aside in a reserve not in the conventional sense like other First Nations’ reserves, but as a block of land that would be reserved for the Lakota to own and homestead in the same manner as other settlers.

In November 1909 Pringle received a letter from the Secretary of Indian Affairs explaining that a reserve could be created. However, Pringle responded that a reserve would not meet the need at all and “They [the Lakota] do not want a reserve and will not live on it.”⁴¹ He argued that the Lakota should be given the same privileges as other settlers and allowed to homestead without restriction. Pringle said he could personally guarantee their conduct, character, and intelligence, and he did not want their homes to be threatened by being taken by homesteaders if the Lakota were powerless to obtain the land themselves. He asked if there was a law that would allow the Lakota to receive all the privileges of citizenship.⁴² Even if Pringle did not understand it to be such, this idea resembles enfranchisement under the Indian Act, in which First Nations people (or entire bands) voluntarily terminated their status in order to become full citizens with individual property rights.⁴³

S. Bray, the Chief Surveyor of Indian Affairs, referred to Pringle’s request in his letter to the Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs in 1909, when he stated that the Lakota could not homestead according to Sec. 164 of the Indian Act, but because the Lakota were self-supporting and good citizens it was the duty of the Department to provide them with “a reasonable area of

⁴⁰ LAC, RG 10, Vol. 7779, File 27137-1, Reel C12061, Rev. A.D. Pringle to the Minister of the Interior, Aug 27, 1909.

⁴¹ LAC, RG 10, Vol. 7779, File 27137-1, Reel C12061, Pringle to the Secretary of the Department of Indian Affairs, November 23, 1909.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ J.R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada*, third edition, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 256 and 281.

land.”⁴⁴ With that, he wanted the Department of the Interior to immediately reserve the township Pringle suggested. He stated though that “the Inspector should ascertain the area these people would be entitled to if they could homestead, and this area should be obtained if possible for them it might be however limited to 160 acres for each family of five, this being the smallest area provided in any of the Treaties.”⁴⁵ Bray, at least, was willing to use the treaties as a measure by which to also deal with the Lakota, who were a non-treaty band in Canada. Pringle wrote in March 1910 to inform the Secretary of Indian Affairs that he would visit the Lakota to see that each man over eighteen years old was able to choose his own quarter section. He also asked that one quarter section be reserved for each male child. He maintained that if full enfranchisement was not possible, they should be given complete ownership of their homesteads, even if the Indian Act had to be amended.⁴⁶ Pringle was adamant that the Lakota have not just land, but individual rights and title to their land. The government, however, was not interested in amending the Indian Act especially for one small non-treaty band, and this of course did not happen.

Pringle may have been so firm about obtaining homesteading rights for the Lakota because that is what he understood they wanted and because he believed the Lakota would not tolerate being subjugated by the government and Indian Affairs in a reserve system. Pringle wrote, “these Indians would hardly submit to the regular disciplines of a Reservation.” However, he thought a government representative, missionary, schoolteacher, and farming instructor should be placed at Wood Mountain for the Lakota.⁴⁷ Pringle suggested that the Lakota were too independent for government control on a reserve but that the assistance that other reserves were promised would be beneficial. The government was unlikely to give the assistance however without assimilation motives, and the assistance Pringle requested never did materialize except for a government representative. These assistance services could have possibly helped the Lakota in times of difficulty, but alternatively the failure to implement assistance may have helped keep government assimilative policies more distant from Wood Mountain through to the 1930s.

⁴⁴ LAC, RG 10, Vol. 7779, File 27137-1, Reel C12061, S. Bray, Chief Surveyor of Indian Affairs to Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs, September 27, 1909.

⁴⁵ LAC, RG 10, S. Bray, Chief Surveyor of Indian Affairs to Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs, September 27, 1909.

⁴⁶ LAC, RG 10, Vol. 7779, File 27137-1, Reel C12061, Rev. A.D. Pringle to the Secretary of the Department of Indian Affairs, March 26, 1910.

⁴⁷ Ibid; and LAC, RG 10, Vol. 7779, File 27137-1, Reel C12061, Rev. A.D. Pringle to the Secretary of the Department of Indian Affairs, April 25, 1910.

An interesting point Pringle made in April 1910 dealt with the Lakota who are not “full-blood.” After visiting the township that was set aside for them at Wood Mountain he wrote: “These Indians are so mixed up with the whites that the percentage of many is quite doubtful; I think that any who have any Indian blood and are bona fide Wood Mountain half breeds or quarter breeds should be able to have land with the Indians in this township; of course they can file anywhere I know but they are to all intents and purposes Wood Mountain Indians and should be considered as such, ie. they are more Indian than White in their customs and ways.”⁴⁸ This is an interesting non-Lakota perspective on the makeup of the Lakota community at Wood Mountain. Pringle suggested that the Lakota community were not just those who had always married other Lakota but also those who married whites and those who were the children of such unions, and therefore “half breeds”⁴⁹ or “quarter breeds.” This would mean that the Ogle, Brown, Thomson, Lethbridge, and some Lecaine families were ‘bona fide’ Wood Mountain Lakota although the government may have been hesitant to label them as such because of their mixed ancestry. Pringle showed how cultural “customs and ways” (that he called “more Indian than White”) were transmitted throughout the generations within all Lakota families despite also adapting to settler society. The censuses almost always specified the off-reserve families as “Indian,” “Red,” or “Sioux”; the only exception to this was the 1906 Census which did not record race⁵⁰ and the 1911 Census which first recorded the Ogle, Thomson, and Brown children as “Sioux” and then crossed out and replaced with the term “English.”⁵¹ The 1901 Census includes a separate section for “Refugee Sioux” but the Ogle, Brown, and Thomson children and their Lakota mothers are still all listed as “Red.”⁵² Regardless of these things, the Thomson, Brown, and Ogle families for reasons unknown were not registered with the band when the reserve was created. In traditional Lakota society, people who were born, married, or adopted into a community were viewed as equal members, and since the differences in how one became a

⁴⁸ LAC, RG 10, Rev. A.D. Pringle to the Secretary of the Department of Indian Affairs, April 25, 1910.

⁴⁹ Pringle’s use of “half breed” should not be confused with some historical (and increasingly current) uses of the term in which it is sometimes interchangeable with the term “Métis.”

⁵⁰ LAC, RG 31, Statistics Canada, *Canada Census of the Northwest Provinces, 1906*, Saskatchewan, District 12 Assiniboia West, Sub-District No. 3A, Pages 1-4, <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/census/1906/Pages/about-census.aspx>, accessed March 19, 2014.

⁵¹ LAC, RG 31 Statistics Canada, *Census of Canada, 1911*, Saskatchewan, District 211, Enumeration District 28, Pages 5-6, <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/census/1911/Pages/about-census.aspx>, accessed March 19, 2014.

⁵² LAC, RG 31 Statistics Canada, *Census of Canada, 1901*, Assiniboia, District 204 Assiniboia West, Sub-Division 55, Wood Mountain, Pages 1-2 and 14, <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/census/1901/Pages/about-census.aspx>, accessed March 19, 2014.

member would not have been pointed out,⁵³ these people would have still been considered part of the Lakota community regardless of what the government labeled them.

After Pringle's inquiries about a reserve and homesteading, more steps were taken to deal with the land issue for the Lakota. In July 1910, Indian Agent William Graham visited Wood Mountain to select a reserve in Township 4, Range 4, West of the Third Meridian. He reported that there were seventy-three Lakota people as well as four men with their families who married into the band from Poplar, Montana, which brought the total up to ninety-two people. However, he did not think the nineteen people that were from Poplar, Montana and their families should be considered for the reserve. He thought the Lakota would not settle on the reserve right away since they were in demand as workers, and that it would be unwise to force them to settle on it. But he thought their children should go to residential schools right away. He found:

Many people were of the opinion that the whole township was to be set aside as a reserve, which of course would mean a large acreage that would be tied up from settlement, and would no doubt be used as pasturage by the Ranchers, as there will be no resident Indians to speak of on the land for a number of years. I should not be in the least surprised to hear of requests being made by outsiders to set the whole township aside for the Indians, as I have been told that the whole township should be reserved.⁵⁴

This statement probably reflects the settlers' desire to have access to pasture for livestock rather than the positive relations that some may have had with the Lakota. It seems like private interest was more of a concern for the people requesting the whole township as the reserve rather than concerns for more land for the Lakota. A few settlers who had been working and living alongside the Lakota people may have been concerned about securing land for the Lakota community, but this does not come through Graham's observations. Graham recommended that the Lakota be given more than Indians in Treaty Four, about 150 acres per head, but that the south half of the township would still not be needed.⁵⁵

Finally, on March 8, 1910, J.D. McLean wrote to Pringle to inform him that Township 4, Range 4, West of the Third Meridian had been temporarily reserved for the Lakota and removed from homesteading. On October 29, 1910 the Canadian government set aside an area three miles

⁵³ Raymond J. DeMallie, "Kinship and Biology in Sioux Culture," in *North American Indian Anthropology: Essays on Society and Culture*, ed. Raymond J. DeMallie and Alfonso Ortiz (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 132.

⁵⁴ LAC, RG 10, Vol. 7779, File 27137-1, Reel C12061, Wm. Graham to Secretary of the Department of Indian Affairs, July 12, 1910.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

by six miles (half a township) at Wood Mountain for the Lakota as a temporary reserve, without an Order in Council.⁵⁶ McLean also told Pringle that the issue of the Lakota being able to homestead would be decided later.⁵⁷

Even though the Department of Indian Affairs was delaying any action on whether the Lakota could homestead, the Lakota did so anyways. In 1907 Okute-Sica and Taskune Nupawin moved their family to Wood Mountain when their horse became a nuisance near Moose Jaw.⁵⁸ Their oldest son, John Lecaine, squatted on NE 27-4-4-W3 in 1907 and on February 10, 1910 he filed for a homestead there.⁵⁹ John Lecaine was the first Lakota person to homestead and his parents and siblings lived nearby him as well.⁶⁰ Eventually when the reserve was created, John Lecaine's homestead was in the middle of it and he gave his land to the reserve in 1952 and joined the band.⁶¹ In 1911 Billy Brown homesteaded in Township 4, Range 4, West of the Third Meridian and received patent in 1918.⁶² Alfred Brown also began farming in 1911.⁶³ In 1911, James Ogle filed for a homestead and by 1918 he had 42 acres of land under cultivation, had increased his horse herd to 100 head and had constructed a log home, stable, granary, and a fence around his land.⁶⁴ These latter three men were Lakota, but their fathers were settlers who had homesteaded before them, so they probably had access to homesteading rights and capital to begin their own farms and ranches through their fathers. More Lakota people would also apply for homesteads before 1930. Some of these Lakota people were interested in farming and pursued that, while others were more interested in raising livestock. Even those who farmed had livestock though, as especially horses were needed for travel and cows for milk.

⁵⁶ LAC, RG 10, Vol. 7779, File 21737-1, Reel C12061, P.G. Keyes Secretary of the Department of Interior to Secretary of the Department of Indian Affairs, October 29, 1910.

⁵⁷ LAC, RG 10, Vol. 7779, File 27137-1, Reel C12061, J.D. McLean to Rev. A.D. Pringle, March 8, 1910.

⁵⁸ CMH, *Legends of Our Times*, "Ranching, Wood Mountain Biographies," "Okute Sica," http://www.historymuseum.ca/cmc/exhibitions/aborig/rodeo/biography_15e.shtml#Okute-Sica, accessed March 15, 2014.

⁵⁹ SAB, Homestead Files, John Lecaine, #1890785, NE 27-4-4-W3.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Elizabeth and Rory Thomson, "The Lakota," in *Wood Mountain Uplands: From the Big Muddy to the Frenchman River*, ed. Thelma Poirier (Wood Mountain, SK: Wood Mountain Historical Society, 2000), 78.

⁶² CMH, *Legends of Our Times*, "Ranching, Wood Mountain Biographies," "Billy Brown," http://www.historymuseum.ca/cmc/exhibitions/aborig/rodeo/biography_22e.shtml#Billy-Brown, accessed March 14, 2014.

⁶³ Wood Mountain Historical Society, *They Came to Wood Mountain*, 135.

⁶⁴ CMH, *Legends of Our Times*, "Ranching, Wood Mountain Biographies," "Canopa Sha (James Ogle)," http://www.historymuseum.ca/cmc/exhibitions/aborig/rodeo/biography_34e.shtml#Canopa-Sha, accessed March 14, 2014.

The Lakota families that had been ranching since the late 1880s and early 1890s were expanding their operations significantly by the 1900s. In 1898, Edward Allen sold his ranch to William Hall Ogle and moved up to Twelve Mile Lake,⁶⁵ and after this the Ogle ranch increased their herds. For the first time, several families had registered brands for their livestock as well. In the 1900 Brand Book, J.H. Thomson had the **DN9** brand registered at Wood Mountain for cattle and the **T** for horses,⁶⁶ W.H. Ogle had **V5** registered for horses,⁶⁷ and Mrs. F. Brown (Frederick Brown's wife Ellen or Tiopa) had the **7** registered for horses.⁶⁸ Private companies only published brand books every few years. The Henderson Brand Books for 1888, 1889, and 1894 do not include any Wood Mountain ranchers.⁶⁹ In 1900, the *Calgary Herald* published the brand book for the Department of Agriculture, which contains Wood Mountain ranchers' brands. This does not mean Wood Mountain ranchers were not branding their livestock prior to 1900, but possibly that they did not feel the need to register their brands or possibly were not ranching on



Figure 5: Ogle's round-up camp. [Wood Mountain Historical Society, Photo No. 0015]

large enough scale to need registered brands. However, by 1900 the Department of Agriculture may have made the process more orderly and a requirement of ranchers. These Wood Mountain ranches had increased as well by that time. In 1907, the same three people had brands registered with the slight difference that W.H. Ogle then had the **N4** brand for cattle. In 1901, the *Moose*

⁶⁵ Wood Mountain Historical Society, *They Came to Wood Mountain*, 23-24.

⁶⁶ *North West Brand Book*, Revised and corrected to Jan. 1st, 1900, Published by the Calgary Herald (?) Co. Ltd. under the authority of the Department of Agriculture, N.W.T., Calgary, AB, 51 and 210.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 243.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 287.

⁶⁹ *Henderson's Northwest rancher's directory and brand book*, (Winnipeg: James Henderson, 1888); *Henderson's Northwest brand book*, 2nd edition, (Winnipeg: Henderson Directory Co., 1889); *Henderson's Northwest brand book*, 3rd edition, (Winnipeg: Henderson Directory Co., 1894).

Jaw Times reported that W.H. Ogle bought 100 hundred mares from Lee Cook of Montana and intended to go into horses. It also reported that Mr. Geo. Hovermale of Montana would be looking after the herd, as he was an experienced breeder.⁷⁰ Before 1901, W.H. Ogle had much smaller herds of both horses and cattle according to his homestead records.⁷¹ By 1906, Ogle had 350 horses, four milk cows, and twenty-two head of cattle.⁷² James Thomson also had increased both his cattle and horse herds to ninety and seventy head respectively by 1906.⁷³

After November 1913, when James Ogle and Elizabeth Lecaine married, they made their living selling horses for which they usually got \$100 to \$300 per animal.⁷⁴ James was involved with ranching from his childhood as his family operated a large ranch of 1000 to 2000 head of horses and their range extended west from Wood Mountain to Mankota. When James was a young boy, he rode with the roundup outfits to herd the horses or cattle and it was his job to take care of the other men's saddle horses. In 1905, when he was twelve, he "graduated into a man's job and joined the other fellows in rounding up horses..."⁷⁵ James gave an excellent description of the Ogle family's ranching operations for the Wood Mountain community history book:

Our horse camp was two miles south and east of where the town of Glentworth is today. We had a sod house there, also corrals, where we used to brand the horses and keep them around for two months with the stallions. After that they were turned out again and round-up was over for another year. Round-up usually started around the first of May and lasted for a month. Interested buyers used to come up to our horse camp and look over the herds and pick out what they wanted. Settlers were starting to trickle in at that time.⁷⁶

The Ogles had a large ranching operation and other Lakota families did not ranch on this scale at this time. However, as James explained, local men, both Lakota and white, would help his family with work on the ranch especially at round-ups. Among the ones he listed were Albert (Soak) Brown, Lawrence (Toto) Brown, and John Lecaine.⁷⁷ Billy Ogle, James' son, also remembered George Ferguson, Freddie Brown, and George (Puncher) Thomson working for his father later.⁷⁸ All of these men may not have been necessarily hired, but rather would have come to help their

⁷⁰ Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, "Moosejaw Times 1901," Rodeo Binder 1894-1919, RG26.SG12.F65.2, *Moose Jaw Times*, May 24, 1901.

⁷¹ SAB, Homestead Files, William Hall Ogle Homestead, file # 596325 SW 28-4-3-W3.

⁷² LAC, *Canada Census of the Northwest Provinces, 1906*, Saskatchewan, District 12 Assiniboia West, Sub-District No. 3A, Page 4.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁷⁴ Wood Mountain Historical Society, *They Came to Wood Mountain*, 58.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 57-58.

⁷⁷ Wood Mountain Historical Society, *They Came to Wood Mountain*, 58-59.

⁷⁸ William (Billy) Ogle, interview with author, August 14, 2013.

neighbors with round-ups and brandings that required more work. The Ogle ranch was an example of the blending of Lakota people with cowboy culture, not only because the Ogles were a Lakota/English ranching family but also because the ranch was a place for other Lakota men to work as cowboys and use Lakota cultural aspects like horsemanship and language.

After 1910, Lakota people who usually wintered and worked at Moose Jaw began settling on the reserve at Wood Mountain. In 1911, Brave Heart and his wife Gray Eagle, Good Track and Susan Goodtrack, White Rabbit (Big Jim) and his wife Fast Deer, Kills Two (Big Joe Ferguson)⁷⁹ and White Buffalo with their three children, and Lean Crow and Good Day Women with their children all moved to the reserve at Wood Mountain.⁸⁰ These families lived by

hunting, gathering, and gardening at Wood Mountain and would keep a few horses for work and travel. Kills Two/Big Joe worked for many ranchers in the Wood Mountain area⁸¹ and as noted earlier, his son George Ferguson worked for ranchers as well. Big Joe and his son Bill Ferguson also worked in the Wood Mountain area as butchers, using the skills Big Joe had learnt while in Moose Jaw.⁸²



Figure 6: Tasunke Nupawin (Emma Lecaine), Okute Sica, Nupa Kikte (Big Joe Ferguson) and Pte Sanwin (Katrine Ferguson), 1900.
[Moose Jaw Public Library, Archives Dept.]

According to George Lecaine, the last winter camp at Moose Jaw was during the winter of 1912-1913 and consisted of Big Joe Ferguson's family, Old Man Hawk, Yellow Hawk, and two other families.⁸³ Some of the people moving seasonally still had horse herds and in 1914, Indian Agent

⁷⁹ The last name Ferguson comes from Nupa Kikte's time working with a butcher in Moose Jaw with the last name Ferguson. Nupa Kikte/Kills Two took his former employer's last name and became known as Big Joe Ferguson. The last name is still used with the Wood Mountain Lakota Ferguson family today. Personal correspondence with Thelma Poirier, June 2013.

⁸⁰ CMH, *Legends of Our Times*, "Ranching, Wood Mountain Biographies," <http://www.historymuseum.ca/cmc/exhibitions/aborig/rodeo/bioindexe.shtml>, accessed March 14, 2014.

⁸¹ CMH, *Legends of Our Times*, "Ranching, Wood Mountain Biographies," "Nupa Kikte (Kills Twice-Big Joe)," www.historymuseum.ca/cmc/exhibitions/aborig/rodeo/biography_07e.shtml#Nupa-Kikte, accessed March 15, 2014.

⁸² Thelma Poirier and Bonnie Day, unpublished manuscript, 1997, 91.

⁸³ Wood Mountain Historical Society, *They Came to Wood Mountain*, 249.

Thomas E. Donnelly reported that the Lakota were able to “realize fair sums of money” for the horses they sold.⁸⁴

In 1914, Julia Lethbridge and her children moved to Wood Mountain. The first summer they lived in a tent at Wood Mountain and moved back to Moose Jaw for the winter, but the next spring and summer Julia’s sons William (Bill), James (Jim), and Pete worked to build their family a log house on the reserve.⁸⁵ Prior to moving to Wood Mountain permanently, William had worked for a rancher in the Dirt Hills south of Moose Jaw and had got first hand experience with jobs connected to ranching.⁸⁶ At Wood Mountain, William and Pete worked on farms and ranches, and “the brothers’ rich experiences at breaking and training horses helped them find jobs in the surrounding area.”⁸⁷ The Lakota used their ingenuity and skills to find work at Wood Mountain after settling on the reserve, and some continued to follow traditional hunting and gathering lifestyles as well. Because they had never left the Wood Mountain area completely some families probably had well-established hunting and gathering sites there that were visited every summer when they stayed at Wood Mountain during their seasonal movements.

After the Lakota settled on the reserve following 1910, they actively made known what they wanted from the government. On July 8, 1912 at Wood Mountain, a memo was drawn up summarizing what several Lakota men discussed regarding their new reserve and what they wanted. William Bocas (Bocasse) “a fairly wealthy Indian first spoke” and requested that they get a chief or headman appointed so that they could “stand between them and the Government Agents.”⁸⁸ Bocasse, Wounded Horse, Thigh, Big Joe, Maple, Good Track, Okute, and Big Jim all made statements requesting a school on the reserve, farm implements because “they could not plow with their hands,” more land for farming and grazing livestock, and good homes built.⁸⁹ All of these men were especially concerned with having a school on the reserve for their children. Bocasse stated that thirteen years prior they talked over sending their children to boarding schools and they approved it then but many of those children died. Thigh said that he personally had children die at the residential schools and so he also wanted a school on the

⁸⁴ 1915 Sessional Papers, Reports of Indian Agents, Thomas E. Donnelly, Indian Agent for Assiniboine Agency, Saskatchewan, “Moosejaw Sioux,” 56.

⁸⁵ Philip Lethbridge, interview with author, July 19, 2013.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ LAC, RG 10, Vol. 7779, File 27137-1, Reel C12061, Glen Campbell, Chief Inspector Department of Indian Affairs, “Memo of Pow-Wow of Sioux Indians at Wood Mountain, July 8th, 1912.”

⁸⁹ Ibid.

reserve. White settlements had their own schools every few miles and he wanted Lakota children to have the same opportunity to attend school. Big Joe argued that since their children would need an education in order to make their way in life he wanted a school built on the reserve, even if it was only a small one that could hold twenty or thirty children and was made of sod. Almost all the other men recorded echoed the school request.⁹⁰ A school was never built on the reserve, but in 1913 a country school was opened and some Lakota did attend school there from on and off the reserve.⁹¹

Another major concern these men brought up was land and agriculture. Bocasse did not want the land sub-divided but rather wanted it as a common for everybody. Wounded Horse wanted a larger reserve and to get livestock to run on it. Thigh was under the impression that the whole township was reserved for them instead of only half a township which he did not think was enough because most of it was range land. Okute Sica wanted to know whether they could sell their lands like white people. Big Jim (Mastinsce/White Rabbit) said he was the first to set an example in squatting on the place where he was living then for six years (he began squatting there in 1906). Big Jim said he had a little farm and garden and wanted others to do the same. All the men agreed that farming implements were needed. All of these issues around land and agriculture were important to the Lakota because they had little to no money to start farming and ranching, and if they did not know it earlier, they at least knew from Pringle that the government gave assistance to First Nations people on reserves to pursue agriculture. However, assistance from the federal government would usually only be given to treaty First Nations, if at all. Nevertheless, the Lakota asked for assistance in agriculture specifically and it is unknown whether they understood that assistance to be tied to treaties or not. It is unclear if agricultural assistance was provided, but according to William Lethbridge, when he moved to the reserve in 1914 the band owned “half a dozen walking plows, two yoke of oxen, two haymowers, two rakes, and one disc”⁹² so it is possible that some farm equipment was provided by the federal government.

All the men who spoke also brought up other issues like settlers stealing wood from the reserve and ensuring that elderly people with no relatives were cared for. All the men also agreed

⁹⁰ LAC, RG 10, Glen Campbell, Chief Inspector Department of Indian Affairs, "Memo of Pow-Wow of Sioux Indians at Wood Mountain, July 8th, 1912."

⁹¹ Thelma Poirier and Bonnie Day, unpublished manuscript, 1997, 63.

⁹² Gus Lecaine, interview by Thelma Poirier, 1997, quoted in Thelma Poirier and Bonnie Day unpublished manuscript, 1997, 96.

that they wanted Mr. Thompson (James Thomson, who they called Okalla or Kit Fox because of his lively way of walking)⁹³ to act as the clerk or acting agent between them and the government.⁹⁴ In 1912 in his letter accompanying the Lakota requests, Glen Campbell does recommend that Indian Affairs appoint Thomson as the agent and to provide the Lakota people's other requests.⁹⁵ James Thomson acted on behalf of the reserve in dealing with the Department of Indian Affairs at least starting in 1916 when his first annual report to Indian Affairs was made.⁹⁶

It is often hard to find sources, especially written sources in government correspondence, where First Nations people share their perspectives first hand, and this makes the memo of all of the above requests so unique. Of course, some things may have been misunderstood or left out in the transmission between verbal and written versions, but nevertheless this memo sheds a lot of light on the Lakota community from their own perspectives and experiences. It is apparent that these men talked a lot within their own community and to each other about the issues they wanted addressed because they all shared the same or very similar ideas. The fact that a group of men, rather than one chief (which is usually what the government wants to deal with), came forward to share not just their individual needs but their whole community's requests indicates that traditional governance and understandings still existed and were still used. These men, and the whole Lakota community they represented, were interested in the survival of their people and for a transition into settler society that was on their own terms and shaped to meet their needs and demands. The way these men came forward and made requests of the government illustrates their community's continued independence and political autonomy. It seems they were not going to relinquish that independence now that they lived on the reserve and had to deal with the government more than they had previously. Rather, this memo shows that they saw dealing with the government now on their own terms as another tool to secure their future and needs and not at all as a subjugated people.

The following year, in March 1913, with the help of a settler Thigh wrote to Glen Campbell, the Chief Inspector of Indian Agencies, about his concerns with the reserve. He stated

⁹³ Wood Mountain Historical Society, *They Came to Wood Mountain*, 30.

⁹⁴ LAC, RG 10, Glen Campbell, "Memo of Pow-Wow of Sioux Indians at Wood Mountain, July 8th, 1912."

⁹⁵ LAC, RG 10, Vol. 7779, File 27137-1, Reel C12061, Glen Campbell, Chief Inspector Department of Indian Affairs, to Secretary of Department of Indian Affairs, July 26, 1912.

⁹⁶ 1916 Sessional Papers, No. 23, Vol. 51, No. 27, Department of Indian Affairs, Part II, Reports of Indian Agents, "Report of J.H. Thompson, Overseer for Wood Mountain Agency, Saskatchewan," 72.

that fourteen people had built houses on the reserve and they intended to break the land in the spring and plant crops. Thigh noted that the entire reserve, with the exception of two or three quarters, was hilly and not suitable for farming except for what they needed to graze their horses. He believed that if they were restricted to one quarter each that they would not be able to live on it and the rest of the reserve would be leased by settlers consequently causing the Lakota not to have any room to graze their horses and the cattle they expected to buy. Furthermore, Thigh wrote, "We know very well that we have to live now as whitemen live, but unless we are protected for years to come and the Reserve as it is made a permanent one we will be driven out by whitemen leasing the country around us."⁹⁷ Thigh was concerned about issues that would become reality in a few years. He demonstrated well the understanding of the transitions the Lakota people were going through in order to survive, but also the struggles they faced especially since they had still not been dealt with by the government.

After Thigh sent his letter to Glen Campbell, J.H. Thomson also wrote to Campbell in March 1913 to express support for the Lakota. Thomson wrote that if Thigh's letter was not sufficient to convince the authorities that more than thirty signatures could be obtained from white settlers in support of the Lakota getting the half township that was set aside temporarily as a permanent reserve.⁹⁸ According to Thomson's letter, there was considerable support from the white community of the Lakota people and their endeavors.

Another great example of how white settlers and Lakota people at Wood Mountain interacted on common ground was the Wood Mountain Races. The annual races expanded significantly between 1895 and 1914 and Lakota participation increased. In 1899 the Wood Mountain Turf Club was created to handle the organizing of the races.⁹⁹ The first secretary of the club was James Thomson¹⁰⁰ and his sons and many other Lakota men would become part of the Turf Club in following years. Many local men, including men from the Thomson, Ogle, Brown, and Lecaine families, bought shares in the Turf Club, usually for one dollar. In 1901, James Thomson was still the secretary and financial records show that Lakota people were involved in many of the horse races. William Bocasse's horse Sioux Chief won several races and Bocasse

⁹⁷ LAC, RG 10, Vol. 7779, File 27137-1, Reel C12061, Thigh to Glen Campbell, March 5, 1913.

⁹⁸ LAC, RG 10, Vol. 7779, File 27137-1, Reel C12061, J.H. Thomson to Glen Campbell, March 7, 1913.

⁹⁹ Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, RG26.SG9.F1.6, "Centennial Souvenir Book," 1990, 2.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

even had another man, Jack Howard,¹⁰¹ as his jockey.¹⁰² James Thomson won two races: the second heat of the quarter-mile with his horse Dandy and the rancher's race by his jockey C. Jackfish.¹⁰³ For the first time, a ladies' race was recorded: the Indian women's race. Lily Bocasse (possibly William Bocasse's wife) won the race on Canadian Maid and second was won by Mrs. Lecaine (presumably Emma Lecaine) on Dangerous.¹⁰⁴ Prize money was awarded for all the races, altogether totaling \$200.¹⁰⁵ The *Moose Jaw Times* reported on the 1901 races and called Bocasse and his horses the "famous 'Bocasse' stables,"¹⁰⁶ attesting to the extent he was known for his horsemanship.

In 1911 the races became more of a rodeo with the addition of bronc riding. There was a racetrack but no arena and chutes, so cowboys "eared down" their horses by pulling and twisting on one of the horse's ears in order to saddle them.¹⁰⁷ Present-day rodeo rules only require an eight second bronc ride, but in the 1910s and 1920s broncs would have been rode to a stand still. In 1911, Lawrence (also known as Alonzo and Toto) Brown won the bronc riding and \$15.¹⁰⁸ Toto and (Albert) Soak Brown would become very well known in the Wood Mountain area as great bronc riders and cowboys, and many still tell stories of their skills and rides. Toto and Soak were the sons of Fred and Ellen (Tiopa) Brown. It is unknown what their names "Soak" (or sometimes spelled



Figure 7: Lawrence (Toto) Brown, on right, competing in the oxen race at the Wood Mountain Stampede, 1912. [Wood Mountain Historical Society]

¹⁰¹ Jack Howard was possibly a young Lakota man who lived in the Wood Mountain area. In the 1906 Census, a John Howard is listed as twenty years old and the stepson of Lakota man Matt Ring. LAC, RG 31 Statistics Canada, *Canada Census of the Northwest Provinces, 1906*, Saskatchewan, District 12 Assiniboia West, Sub-District No. 3A, Page 2, <http://data2.collectionscanada.ca/e/e049/e001207684.pdf>, accessed March 19, 2014.

¹⁰² Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, Rodeo Binder 1894-1919, RG26.SG12.F65.1, "Wood Mountain Rodeo" 1901.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, Rodeo Binder 1894-1919, RG26.SG12.F65.2, "Moosejaw Times 1901."

¹⁰⁷ Wood Mountain Historical Society, *They Came to Wood Mountain*, 214.

¹⁰⁸ Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, Rodeo Binder 1894-1919, RG26- Rodeo, RG26.SG12.F70.4-.5, "Wood Mountain Turf Club 1911."

as “Sooke”) and “Toto” mean, and whether they were Lakota names or nicknames, but this is a definite possibility. In 1912, Toto Brown even took part in an oxen race at the Wood Mountain rodeo.¹⁰⁹ Billy Ogle was told that Soak Brown could reach down and pick his tobacco pouch off the ground when it fell out of his pocket without dismounting his horse. The man who saw Soak Brown do this decided that showed that Soak was a “real cowboy.”¹¹⁰



Figure 8: “Three Lakota Cowboys,”
L to R: Andrew Thomson, Soak Brown, & George Thomson.
[Wood Mountain Historical Society, Photo No. 0930-3]

Another time while at the Mossbank rodeo probably in the early 1940s,¹¹¹ an air force man said to a group of Lakota cowboys from Wood Mountain, “cowboys and Indians” commenting possibly in a condescending manner on how those men were both. Soak Brown replied, “and Englishmen too”¹¹² possibly commenting on the air force man’s race in return. As Soak’s

words and the aptly titled photo, “Three Lakota Cowboys” (see Figure 8) demonstrate, these men were simultaneously Lakota and cowboys and were not ashamed of it. Soak Brown also made saddles with his wife Jenny Haggai after their marriage in 1918, one of which is on display at the Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum. He would make the forms and cut and sew the leather while she covered the trees with rawhide.¹¹³ Both Soak and Toto worked for other ranchers in the

¹⁰⁹ Wood Mountain Historical Society, *They Came to Wood Mountain*, 137.

¹¹⁰ William (Billy) Ogle, interview by author, August 14th, 2013.

¹¹¹ As part of the British Commonwealth Air Training Program (BCATP), the No. 2 Bombing and Gunnery School was established in 1940 at Mossbank, Saskatchewan to train air bomber and air gunner students for the Second World War. The base was closed in December 1944. The air force man referred to was most likely part of the BCATP at Mossbank. Rachel Lea Heide and Ross Herrington, “British Commonwealth Air Training Plan,” *The Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan*, accessed April 9, 2014, http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/british_commonwealth_air_training_plan.html.

¹¹² Rachel Lea Heide and Ross Herrington, “British Commonwealth Air Training Plan,” *The Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan*, accessed April 9, 2014, http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/british_commonwealth_air_training_plan.html.

¹¹³ CMH, *Legends of Our Times*, “Ranching, Wood Mountain Biographies,” “Albert Brown (Soak),” http://www.historymuseum.ca/cmc/exhibitions/aborig/rodeo/biography_23e.shtml#Albert-Brown, accessed March 19, 2014.

Wood Mountain area as cowboys, including W.H. Ogle and Harry Hourie.¹¹⁴ William (Bill) Lethbridge used to say that Toto Brown rode broncs “just like a rocking chair” because he made it look easy.¹¹⁵ Soak and Toto Brown competed in various rodeos, not just the Wood Mountain rodeo. When W.H. Ogle worked as a judge for the Calgary Stampede, Toto even competed there in 1914.¹¹⁶ The Brown brothers were well known as great Lakota cowboys and both brothers eventually moved to Montana in the 1940s.¹¹⁷

At the rodeo, Lakota people competed in a variety of events. In 1912, the ladies race was



Figure 9: Anokan San Mato/Bear with Grey Sides (Billy Bocasse) with son, n.d.
[Canadian Museum of History]

open to all women, not just Lakota women, and Mrs. W. Ogle (Mary Ogle) won second and five dollars in prize money.¹¹⁸ Again in 1912, Lawrence (Toto) Brown won the bronc riding and received fifteen dollars.¹¹⁹ James (Jim) Ogle won money also for winning in multiple horse races.¹²⁰ Lakota people were not just contestants in the rodeo, but also worked for the Turf Club to put on the rodeo. In 1911, Crazy Jack and Billy Brown were hired to work for the Turf Club,¹²¹ most likely to do repairs before and during for the rodeo. After 1914, Lakota people would fill the role of workers for the rodeo even more.

As mentioned previously, Billy Bocasse was well known as a skilled horseman and he owned many horses, possibly more than any other Lakota person at Wood

¹¹⁴ CMH, *Legends of Our Times*, “Ranching, Wood Mountain Biographies,” “Albert Brown (Soak),” http://www.historymuseum.ca/cmc/exhibitions/aborig/rodeo/biography_23e.shtml#Albert-Brown, accessed March 19, 2014.

¹¹⁵ Philip Lethbridge, interview by author, July 19th, 2013.

¹¹⁶ William (Billy) Ogle, interview by author, August 14th, 2013.

¹¹⁷ CMH, *Legends of Our Times*, “Ranching, Wood Mountain Biographies,” “Albert Brown (Soak),” http://www.historymuseum.ca/cmc/exhibitions/aborig/rodeo/biography_23e.shtml#Albert-Brown, accessed March 19, 2014; and Thelma Poirier and Bonnie Day, unpublished manuscript, 1997, 85.

¹¹⁸ Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, “Wood Mountain Rodeo Information Sheet 1912,” Rodeo Binder 1894-1919, RG26- Rodeo, File # Unknown.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, “Wood Mountain Rodeo Information Sheet 1912,” Rodeo Binder 1894-1919, RG26- Rodeo, File # Unknown.

¹²¹ Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, “Wood Mountain Turf Club 1911,” Rodeo Binder 1894-1919, RG26- Rodeo, RG26.SG12.F70.4 and .5; and Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, “Wood Mountain 1911” Turf Club, Rodeo Binder 1894-1919, RG26- Rodeo, RG26.SG12.F69.2 to .4.

Mountain. As settlement at Wood Mountain increased, Bocasse began selling horses to homesteaders in the Wood Mountain area. Alfred O. Hatelid recalled that he bought his first horse from Bocasse in 1910.¹²² Hatelid bought a two-year-old colt that Bocasse broke and named “Shunk-e-ka” or “horse,” but Hatelid shortened the name to “Shunk” which was “to the amusement of his Indian friends as this meant dog in Sioux.”¹²³ Hatelid rode at the time for William Hall Ogle’s horse ranch,¹²⁴ possibly using the horse he bought from Bocasse. In about 1914 another settler, William Todd, also went to Billy Bocasse’s home, had tea with Bocasse and his wife, and bought a saddle pony. Todd called Bocasse a police scout and “rawhider”¹²⁵ a term that could mean that Bocasse also worked rawhide and leather to make whips and ropes for his use. These interactions were not just business, but both instances show neighborly exchanges between Wood Mountain community members across race and culture boundaries. The “cowboy culture” and horses helped cross those boundaries and even create friendships between Lakota people and settlers.

Throughout this chapter, it is evident that Lakota women were central to their community and families’ survival and undertakings, and this centrality stems from traditional Lakota culture. Kinship and community membership was embedded in connections through women. Within Lakota society, “the woman as a community member was related to everyone who lived there, [and] the newcomer simultaneously gained relationship through her to them all, as if the kin relationship had existed since birth.”¹²⁶ This meant that the Lakota community at Wood Mountain in the early years before 1930 was not confined only to the reserve or those people who moved seasonally or to those people who were ranching since the 1890s at Wood Mountain; it included them all because they were all inter-related through the women of the community.

The Lakota women also helped to make the Lakota people’s community part of the wider Wood Mountain community through their medical assistance for settler families, participating in the rodeo, and entertaining Lakota and settler neighbors in their homes. Moreover, these Lakota women’s direct contributions to their families’ pursuits in ranching, horse selling, and farming helped to increase the Lakota people’s ability to participate in the wider Wood Mountain area

¹²² Wood Mountain Historical Society, *They Came to Wood Mountain*, 202.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 146.

¹²⁶ Raymond J. DeMallie, “Kinship and Biology in Sioux Culture,” in *North American Indian Anthropology: Essays on Society and Culture*, ed. Raymond J. DeMallie and Alfonso Ortiz (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 132.

community and to become more self-sufficient. For example, Ellen Brown was the first Lakota woman to have her family's livestock brand registered in her name, which at least legally gave her the power over her family's most important and most expensive resource.¹²⁷ James Ogle mentioned the importance of his wife, Elizabeth Ogle (nee Lecaine), in their ranching success:

Wives had a lot of hard work to do in those days and if my memory serves me right, a lot of women had to help outdoors as well, which wasn't a very easy job, especially when most mothers had little children to care for too. I remember my wife used to ride with me on our own round-ups and it would be a good day's ride. We would take our lunch along and would be gone all day. We never had any trouble getting to sleep at night after those rides. My wife is a very good woman, a hard worker and I owe her a lot for my success, if I had any, as she pulled more than her share of the load all these years.¹²⁸

Lakota women, like other ranching wives, were not relegated to only "domestic" work but had roles both in and outside of the home that were essential and would not have been foreign in Lakota cultural understandings of gender roles that were at times flexible in order to do what was necessary for the good of the family and/or community.¹²⁹

This chapter has shown Lakota perspectives of themselves and how they directly dealt with the government and other non-Lakota people at Wood Mountain. Understanding how Lakota people maintained their culture and identity while intermixing with settler structures has to be done with Lakota voices in the forefront. With this, government and other settler perspectives were also included to deepen understandings of outward expressions of Lakota culture and community that were apparent to "outsiders." The stories from Lakota people and settlers illustrated the diversity and depth of the interactions and relations between the two groups and demonstrate well how Lakota people were considered neighbors (whether in positive or negative situations) and part of the overall Wood Mountain community. Through the difficult winters, disease, and hunger the Lakota persisted and began to expand at Wood Mountain into more established agricultural pursuits and into the wider community more as the area's population increased. At the same time, many of the Lakota children born in Canada took

¹²⁷ See Chapter Three for more discussion on Lakota women's livestock brands.

¹²⁸ Wood Mountain Historical Society, *They Came to Wood Mountain*, 59.

¹²⁹ Barbara Risch, "Wife, Mother, Provider, Defender, God: Women in Lakota Winter Counts," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 27, no. 3 (2003): 25; and Teresa D. La Framboise, Anneliese M. Heyle, and Emily J. Ozer, "Changing and Diverse Roles of Women in American Indian Cultures," *Sex Roles* 22, no. 7/8, (1990): 455–476.

advantage of their place between Lakota and settler societies, customs, and identities as they grew up in the Wood Mountain area and created lifestyles that utilized both sides.

Chapter Three: “Now I am nothing. I do not have a horse”:

Thrive as Cowboys, Survive as Lakota, 1915-1930

The Lakota people’s continuous relationship with horses enabled their transition into agriculture and cowboy culture. Horses were still necessary for travel and for farm and ranch work from 1915 to 1930, especially in rural Wood Mountain where there was no railroad for transporting grain, livestock, and people until 1927. After the First World War, machinery and tractors started to replace horses on farms for work and as a result ranchers turned to raising cattle rather than horses. Many of the second generation of Lakota people in Canada started their own agricultural pursuits after 1915 as well, and a large number of them applied for homesteads for both ranching and farming. Lakota women also became a larger part of the legal property ownership in this period, particularly because more Lakota women had livestock brands in their names and others had to operate their families’ agricultural endeavors without their husbands. As Lakota agriculture interests were maturing, so was the Wood Mountain Stampede. The Stampede became a larger rodeo with more events and Lakota participated more than ever, not only in more events but also by working for the Turf Club in the rodeo’s operation. For Lakota men and women the rodeo became the arena to publicly display simultaneous Lakota and cowboy culture, which drew a lot of Lakota participation and large non-aboriginal crowds. The period between 1915 and 1930 may have been the heyday for Wood Mountain Lakota intersections between agriculture, rodeo, and cultural traditions because they were well established at Wood Mountain with little government interference and control—which would increase after 1930 with the ratification of the Wood Mountain Lakota reserve.

Lakota men acquired homesteads to pursue both ranching and farming. Some homesteads were proven up, some were given up. In many cases, established ranchers and farmers such as James Ogle, William Hall Ogle, James Thomson, Andrew Thomson, and Alonzo Brown, and some white settlers helped other Lakota men apply for homesteads by giving sworn statements. Possibly some men opted to apply for homesteads because there was not enough land on the reserve for everyone to farm and graze livestock.¹ John Lecaine wrote that he began homesteading out of necessity because there was no reserve land for the Lakota.² Most of the men who were registered as part of the band and homesteaded did so close to the reserve, usually

¹ Thelma Poirier and Bonnie Day, unpublished manuscript, 1997, 97.

² LAC, RG 10, Vol. 7973, File 62-137, Part 1, Wood Mountain Band Membership, 1930, John Lecaine to the Minister of the Interior, July 20, 1931.

south or east of it. Under Section 70 of the Indian Act, “Indians,” whether treaty or non-treaty, were not able to homestead.³ First Nations people did want to homestead, and historian Sarah Carter found many examples of First Nations men questioning the system that would not let them do so. Carter explains that “An 1880 amendment to the Indian Act clearly distinguished an ‘Indian’ from a ‘person’” and since only “persons” could homestead, Indians were “deliberately and legally denied the right to homestead.”⁴ The prohibition on “Indians” homesteading existed until 1951 when there was virtually no homestead land left.⁵ Carter found many First Nations, including John Lecaine, who homesteaded anyway, and were involved in agriculture off the reserve, before and after reserves were created.⁶ In 1895, Indian Affairs decided that a First Nations man could homestead if the man was enfranchised, as the man would then cease to be an “Indian” and the Indian Act would no longer apply to him.⁷ First Nations people who were enfranchised no longer had the rights (or the restrictions) outlined in the Indian Act or on reserves that went with being legally recognized as “Indian.” Agents of Dominion Lands in Manitoba and the Northwest Territories were notified that enfranchised Indians disposed of their land on reserves and that a certificate or other evidence that they were enfranchised would be provided to land agents to apply for a homestead so that the land agents could decide whether “the applicant is entitled to the privilege of making an entry.”⁸ Carter briefly discusses the experiences of John Lecaine and his brothers in obtaining their homesteads. John did become enfranchised, but eventually he regained his status and became part of the Wood Mountain band again after he turned over his homestead to the reserve in 1952.⁹

George Lecaine applied for a homestead on February 15, 1915 on NE 15-4-4-W3 and he got title to the land in August 1920.¹⁰ Every year between 1915 and 1920 he cultivated ten to thirty acres and had livestock. George Lecaine eventually had to give up his homestead to pay

³ Sarah Carter, “Erasing and Replacing: Property and Homesteading Rights of First Nations Farmers of Manitoba and the Northwest, 1870s-1910s,” in *Place and Replace: Essays on Western Canada*, eds. Adele Perry, Esyllt W. Jones, and Leah Morton (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2013), 25.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 25-26.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 26-34.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁸ *Ibid.*; and LAC, RG 15, D II 1, Volume 750, File 478,863, Letter, Lynwoode Pereira to John McKenzie, August 31, 1898, quoted in Sarah Carter, “Erasing and Replacing: Property and Homesteading Rights of First Nations Farmers of Manitoba and the Northwest, 1870s-1910s,” 29.

⁹ Thelma Poirier and Bonnie Day, unpublished manuscript, 1997, 99.

¹⁰ Saskatchewan Archives Board (SAB), Homestead files, George Lecaine, File # 3325740, NE 15-4-4-W3.

for taxes sometime between 1920 and 1928.¹¹ In 1930 he applied for another quarter (SW 31-4-3-W3), and he lived there with his wife and family until 1951.¹²

John Lecaine also tried to get his brother Walter to start homesteading. Walter applied for a homestead, but his application was cancelled because he was not eighteen years old yet.¹³ John wrote an affidavit to Dominion Lands on June 7, 1915 to try to hold the southwest quarter of 15-4-4-W3 for Walter.¹⁴ Walter was to turn eighteen either in November or December of 1915 (John gave two dates for Walter's birthday), and John wanted the quarter held for Walter until then. A letter dated June 23, 1915 from the Department of the Interior to the Department of Indian Affairs stated that the land would be held,¹⁵ but in October of 1915 the Agent of Dominion Lands wrote to John to explain that the land would not be reserved for Walter and therefore the quarter was opened to homesteading.¹⁶

Lastly Charles Lecaine (brother to George, Walter, and John) applied for a second homestead under a soldier grant in 1930 on NW-31-4-4-W3. Charles already had a homestead he obtained title to in 1917 on the quarter NW 6-5-4-W3.¹⁷ Charles enlisted in the First World War with the 152nd Battalion in Weyburn on April 1, 1916 and this is what his soldier grant was based on.¹⁸

John underwent the enfranchisement process in order to homestead,¹⁹ but it is unclear if his brothers did the same. Since Charles and George were able to homestead and probably did so at John's urging, they most likely also became enfranchised. Carter states that their homesteading was "through unusual and special circumstances involving the establishment of their reserve."²⁰ Possibly because the Wood Mountain reserve was still considered temporary the Lecaine brothers were able to apply for homesteads more easily than other First Nations at the

¹¹ Ibid., George Lecaine to the Minister of the Interior, March 12, 1928.

¹² Thelma Poirier and Bonnie Day, unpublished manuscript, 1997, 101.

¹³ SAB, Homestead Files, Walter Okute, File # 3328522, SW 15-4-4-W3, Agent of Dominion Lands G.K. Smith to Commissioner of Dominion Lands, May 17, 1915.

¹⁴ Ibid., John Lecaine, "Affidavit by Relative in Support of an Application for Reservation of a Homestead on behalf of a Minor" June 7, 1915.

¹⁵ SAB, Homestead Files, Walter Okute, File # 3328522, SW 15-4-4-W3, Agent of Dominion Lands G.K. Smith to the Secretary of the Department of Indian Affairs, June 23, 1915.

¹⁶ Ibid., Agent of Dominion Lands G.K. Smith to John Lecaine, October 19, 1915.

¹⁷ SAB, Homestead files, Charles Lecaine, File # 269109, NW 6-5-4-W3.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ LAC, RG 10, Vol. 7973, File 62-137, Part 1, Wood Mountain Band Membership, 1930, W. M. Graham to Secretary of the Dept. of Indian Affairs, August 7, 1931.

²⁰ Sarah Carter, "Erasing and Replacing: Property and Homesteading Rights of First Nations Farmers of Manitoba and the Northwest, 1870s-1910s," 34.

time. The Lakota still straddled the margins of being considered “refugee American Indians,” non-status, and status Indians and in some cases, such as the homesteading question, they slipped into different “categories” depending on the situations and how Indian Affairs wanted to define the Lakota. These definitions were arbitrary and completely reliant on how Indian Affairs wanted to deal with the Lakota, including handling their reserve land later.

Other Lakota men also applied for homesteads in this period. At first, William and Pete Lethbridge worked in the Wood Mountain area on farms and ranches. “The brothers’ rich experiences at breaking and training horses helped them find jobs in the surrounding area” because William had worked for a rancher in the Dirt Hills south of Moose Jaw and had first hand experience with handling livestock on ranches.²¹ William also worked one summer digging postholes for the telegraph line before he started homesteading in 1916. This work probably helped William and Pete save money for the farms and ranches they wanted.

William filed for a homestead on SW15-4-4-W3 about five miles south of the NWMP post.²² William had no farm equipment at first, so he worked for Alfred Brown who lived one mile away and had contracts to supply hay for the Wood Mountain NWMP in exchange for the use of Brown’s equipment.²³ William worked for Alfred Brown until he could afford his own equipment.²⁴ His first year on his homestead, he broke about fifteen acres and seeded it to flax. The next year (1917) he broke the same amount and had crops of flax and oats.²⁵ Later he broke horses for a local rancher in return for the use of the horses. He also hauled hay and wheat with a team and sled in the winter to Limerick to the north.²⁶ Sometimes he would use his cowboy skills in order to acquire the horsepower he needed for farming. He would get a team of unbroken horses from a rancher and use them for his farm work and therefore break them to drive in the process. When William returned the horses in the fall, the team would be broken and the value of the horses would have increased for the rancher. Other times William would trade a

²¹ Philip Lethbridge, interview with author, July 19, 2013.

²² Wood Mountain Historical Society, *They Came to Wood Mountain*, 135.

²³ Philip Lethbridge, interview with author, July 19, 2013.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Wood Mountain Historical Society, *They Came to Wood Mountain*, 135.

²⁶ Canadian Museum of History (CMH, formerly the Canadian Museum of Civilization), *Legends of Our Times*, “Ranching, Wood Mountain Biographies,” “Wasu Mato (Hail Bear/William Lethbridge),” http://www.historymuseum.ca/cmc/exhibitions/aborig/rodeo/biography_26e.shtml#Wasu-Mato, accessed April 14, 2014.

calf for a young horse to break.²⁷ When William was ninety-one, his last horse, a pinto, died and he said, “Now, I am nothing. I do not have a horse.”²⁸ Although William primarily farmed, the significance of horses in his identity was still strong. William’s words show that horses played a vital role not just in agricultural pursuits, but also in identities as they had for generations for Lakota people.

In 1916, Pete Lethbridge also filed for a homestead, but he later gave it up because he was more interested in being a cowboy than farming. He instead worked for ranchers in the area as a hired cowboy.²⁹ Pete also farmed some of his family’s allotment on the reserve in the 1920s.³⁰ Albert (Soak) Brown also received patent for his homestead at SW 14-4-4-W3 in 1920, at which time he had fifty-five acres under cultivation and a small herd of horses. But like Pete, “He was always more interested in raising horses than in farming...[and] He often worked as a cowboy on round-up crews for William Ogle and Harry Hourie.”³¹

Many years of drought took a toll on Wood Mountain ranchers and farmers, including those Lakota. In 1917 a bad drought struck the area and each year until 1922 the drought returned.³² Many other Wood Mountain people lost crops and livestock during those years³³ and some Lakota ranchers and farmers including George Lecaine, William Lethbridge, and Willie Ogle claimed lost crops and livestock from the government and applied for seed grain from the government in those years.³⁴ Historian Barry Potyondi found in his research

...that as early as 1922 only 60 percent of the original homesteaders of Township 6 remained. Forty per cent of their land had been sold, with 78 per cent going to owners outside the township and the other 22 per cent to farmers within the township. Fewer than a quarter of the original settlers were in a position to expand their holdings. The drought affected the few remaining ranches too... Cattle starved. Hoping that the drought was

²⁷ Kathleen Lethbridge journals, 1929-1996, quoted in Thelma Poirier and Bonnie Day, unpublished manuscript, 1997, 102.

²⁸ Thelma Poirier and Bonnie Day, unpublished manuscript, 1997, 104.

²⁹ CMH, *Legends of Our Times*, “Ranching, Wood Mountain Biographies,” “Hehaka Gleska (Spotted Elk/Peter Lethbridge),” http://www.historymuseum.ca/cmc/exhibitions/aborig/rodeo/biography_27e.shtml#Hehaka-Gleska, accessed April 14, 2014.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ CMH, *Legends of Our Times*, “Ranching, Wood Mountain Biographies,” “Albert Brown (Soak),” http://www.historymuseum.ca/cmc/exhibitions/aborig/rodeo/biography_23e.shtml#Albert-Brown, accessed April 14, 2014.

³² Barry Potyondi, “Losing Ground: Farm Settlers on the Periphery,” in *Wood Mountain Uplands: From the Big Muddy to the Frenchman River*, ed. Thelma Poirier (Wood Mountain: Wood Mountain Historical Society, 2000), 143.

³³ Ibid., 143-144.

³⁴ SAB, Homestead Files, George Lecaine, File # 3325740, NE 15-4-4-W3; Willie Ogle, File # 2157386 NE 26-4-3-W3; and William Lethbridge, File # 3328522 SW 15-4-4-W3.

temporary, the ranchers imported hay and straw, but soon they were trailing herds to the nearest railhead for sale and slaughter. By 1926 all of the larger ranches had either been opened for homesteading or replaced by smaller operations.³⁵

Lakota ranching and farming families held on, though, and relied on each other and their neighbors more than ever through the hard times.

Besides their own farming and cowboy work, Lakota people helped out others in the area. In the spring of 1916, William Lethbridge helped his neighbor fight a prairie fire that had come up from the south somewhere near Macworth or Lonesome Butte. William remembered that they used feed sacks to keep the fire away from his neighbor's buildings and other neighbors came to help as well until it was controlled another two miles north of them, east of the North West Mounted Police post.³⁶ In 1917 and 1918, John Lecaine and his brothers helped John Yorga with threshing with four teams of horses.³⁷ In the summer of 1917, Andrew Thomson and William Lethbridge put up hay for the NWMP because Andrew had a contract with the NWMP to put up thirty tons of hay and fifteen tons of lignite coal.³⁸ At that time, Alec Wounded Horse and his son were mining lignite coal at the reserve and supplying settlers.³⁹ All these examples show how the Lakota people were neighbors to each other and to other settlers in the area. The assistance they gave and received from other Lakota and white neighbors helped to further intertwine the Lakota in the Wood Mountain community. Iverson, reflecting other scholars' observations, stated that "the evolution of a sense of place and the emotion and tradition that become a part of one's generations in a particular location cannot be considered the exclusive province of only one group in the region,"⁴⁰ and certainly the Lakota people's process of blending traditional culture and cowboy culture was in part because of interactions with white settlers and society. Both groups developed similar connections to the area through agriculture and their interactions at Wood Mountain.

The Lakota also had indigenous connections to the area and their chosen agricultural lifestyles that went beyond economic reasons. Their spiritual, historical, and kinship relations to the land, the people that came before them there, and the animals (both their livestock such as

³⁵ Barry Potyondi, "Losing Ground: Farm Settlers on the Periphery," 143-144.

³⁶ Wood Mountain Historical Society, *They Came to Wood Mountain*, 135.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 89.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 135.

³⁹ *Ibid.* Also see Thomson's 1916 report.

⁴⁰ Peter Iverson, *When Indians Became Cowboys*, xiv.

horses and wildlife) played a role in the connection to the area and the community they had there. The Lakota people had these connections at Wood Mountain for generations before they arrived there in 1876 and before they established their current permanent community there, and those deep-rooted connections helped them to decide to pursue a future in the Wood Mountain hills.

On the reserve, the Lakota people were also increasing their agricultural pursuits and becoming more self-sufficient. The annual report of J.H. Thompson (Thomson) in the 1916 Sessional Papers, stated:

During the past year these Indians have made some improvements and some preparations for grain-growing by increasing their area of breaking. Heretofore only corn and garden stuff have been grown. A wire fence has been built inclosing an area of half a mile square for a pasture, to be used for animals liable to stray. Coal-lignite-has been found on the reserve and the Indians aim to mine and sell what they can of it to the settlers. The health of the people has been remarkably good, there has been very little sickness.⁴¹







People on the reserve, according to Thomson's report, were making use of the reserve land and expanding to use more, especially for livestock and farming—steps that Indian Affairs officials said they were eager to see First Nations taking. As previously mentioned, Pete Lethbridge



**Figure 10: Thomson house, L to R: Howard Thomson, Sam East, James H. Thomson, Ida Thomson, Mary Thomson, Mrs. Little Eagle, Crazy Jack, Bully Thomson, and Charles Rucker, 1919.
[Wood Mountain Historical Society, Photo No. 1017]**

⁴¹ 1916 Sessional Papers, No. 23, Vol. 51, No. 27, Department of Indian Affairs, Part II, Reports of Indian Agents, "Report of J.H. Thompson, Overseer for Wood Mountain Agency, Sask," 72.

farmed some on the reserve in the 1920s and after returning from the First World War, James Wounded Horse also started farming and ranching on the reserve.⁴² James Thomson recorded for the census in 1921 that there were twenty farmers on the reserve out of the thirty-eight people (twenty-one males and seventeen females) living there.⁴³ Later, although rarely done, threshing crews were hired or work was traded from people who lived off the reserve. John Lecaine and his sons sometimes stooked grain or drove a team for Russell Flynn who lived northwest of the reserve in return for Flynn threshing with the Lecaines on the reserve.⁴⁴ Apparently for some people, agriculture on the reserve was productive and people engaged in it even through the drought years.

In 1917, many Wood Mountain ranchers had horse and cattle brands registered, including several more Lakota families. Some people like W.H. Ogle and Ellen Brown still had their same brands registered for horses and cattle.⁴⁵ Their continued use of registered brands shows that their ranches were successful. Some people were registering livestock brands for the first time, such as Andrew Thomson (cattle brand )⁴⁶ Albert Brown (horse brand )⁴⁷ William Hall and James Ogle together () for cattle,⁴⁸ James Ogle () for cattle,⁴⁹ William (Billy) Bocas (Bocasse) (horse brand )⁵⁰ and James White Rabbit (Big Jim) (the ) for horses).⁵¹ Billy Bocasse and Big Jim are the first Lakota men who did not have previous family connections in ranching to have brands registered. At the time, Big Jim was also living on the reserve and so was the first man from the reserve to have a brand for his horses. All these brands registered for the first time to new Lakota people and families demonstrate that owning livestock and ranching expanded both on and off the reserve. Younger Lakota people were especially

⁴² Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, RG10 Block 1 A214.1 Wounded Horse, James File," Wounded Horse," Obituary from unknown newspaper, 1976.

⁴³ Ancestry.com. *1921 Census of Canada* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2013, <http://search.ancestry.ca/search/db.aspx?dbid=8991>, accessed April 30, 2014, original from: LAC, RG 31 Statistics Canada, *Sixth Census of Canada, 1921*, Saskatchewan, District No. 220, Sub-District No. 79, Wood Mountain, 1-2.

⁴⁴ Gus Lecaine, interview by Thelma Poirier, 1997.

⁴⁵ Saskatchewan Animal Industry Branch, *Saskatchewan Cattle and Horse Brands*, Revised and corrected to December 31, 1917 (Regina: J.W. Reid, King's Printer, 1918): 78, 205, and 220.

⁴⁶ *Saskatchewan Cattle and Horse Brands*, Revised and corrected to December 31, 1917, 6.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 144.







⁴⁸ Ibid., 56.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 84.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 216.

⁵¹ Ibid.

becoming more involved in ranching and livestock, and their registered brands show that they were planning to grow their own enterprises and continue to stay at Wood Mountain.

Many more Lakota women also had brands registered in 1917. Before this time, only Ellen Brown had a brand registered in her name. Mary Thomson had the **DN9** cattle brand and the  for horses⁵² (both were previously registered under her husband James' name), Mrs. A. W. Brown had  registered for cattle,⁵³ Mrs. W.H. Ogle (**M-O** for cattle and **MO** for horses),⁵⁴ Edith Ogle (horse brand **EO**),⁵⁵ Mrs. Ethel O. Thomson (horse brand )⁵⁶ Miss Nellie Thomson ( for horses),⁵⁷ Lucy Ogle (horse brand )⁵⁸ and Mrs. F. (Ellen) Brown ( for horses that she had earlier).⁵⁹ It was not entirely uncommon for women to have registered brands in their names; flipping through the historic brand books a person can usually stumble across a few women's names. However, the occurrence of this practice by First Nations women in Canada has not been studied. It can be assumed that First Nations women rarely registered brands in their names because most First Nations ranching was on reserves where brands were registered through the men or communally under the direction of the Indian Agents and farming instructors. The Lakota women who had brands registered at Wood Mountain are therefore unique examples. Their husbands probably registered their brands for them and the livestock was not their individual property but the property of their families. Local historian Thelma Poirier speculates that this practice was done to ensure the women and children were not left penniless if the patriarch died, as women did not have the same property rights as men.

The practice of registering the brands in the women's names reinforces Lakota women's centrality and importance in not just their families' domestic lives but also their families' business, and specifically ranching, endeavors. It reinforces Lakota women's abilities and authority that also exist in traditional Lakota culture, especially with family livestock. James R. Walker, an anthropologist, observed within traditional Lakota society that the horse herds were

⁵² *Saskatchewan Cattle and Horse Brands*, Revised and corrected to December 31, 1917, 23 and 198.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 76 and 182.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 152.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 154.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 184.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 188.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 220.

considered the property of the entire family.⁶⁰ However, women did not have the same authority over the horse herds traditionally as men did. Horses owned and used by women were usually the ones valued the least while men owned the prized horses for buffalo hunting, warfare, and racing.⁶¹ Property taken in raids was considered private property, so horses were taken and held in this way by men as well.⁶² However according to scholars Patricia Albers and Jennifer Brown aboriginal women were able to gain social status through marriages to white men.⁶³ Albers argued that Sioux women were able to gain independence and influence in both the white and Sioux community through their marriage to white men.⁶⁴ She says the autonomy that the women in her study gained was exceptional for women at that time (even for non-aboriginal women) but that “they pioneered a pattern of female independence that would become more widespread among the Sioux in later years.”⁶⁵ The circumstances of marriage and influence and independence that Albers found apply to the Lakota women at Wood Mountain who married white men. These Lakota women were able to gain authority in their marriages to white men, especially in their families’ ranches. Even second generation Lakota couples such as Ethel and John Thomson and single Lakota women like Nellie Thomson and Lucy Ogle continued the practice of registering livestock brands in women’s names and so continued the recognition of Lakota women’s rights and abilities to deal with property for themselves and their families. Lakota women, like other ranch wives, were capable of tending to their families’ ranches while caring for their children and homes when their husbands were away.

⁶⁰ James R. Walker, “Oglala Social Customs,” in *Lakota Society*, ed. Raymond J. DeMallie (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 56.

⁶¹ Alan M. Klein, “The Political-Economy of Gender: A 19th Century Plains Indian Case Study,” in *The Hidden Half: Studies of Plains Indian Women*, edited by Patricia Albers and Beatrice Medicine (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1983), 157.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 150.

⁶³ Patricia C. Albers, “Sioux Women in Transition: A Study of Their Changing Status in Domestic and Capitalist Sectors of Production,” in *The Hidden Half: Studies of Plains Indian Women*, edited by Patricia Albers and Beatrice Medicine (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1983), 193; Jennifer Brown, *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980), 215.

⁶⁴ Patricia C. Albers, “Sioux Women in Transition,” 193.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 194.



Figure 11: Wood Mountain Lakota women and children, left to right: Tasunka Topa Naunpewin/Horse Ran Four Times, John Lecaine, Christina Lecaine holding baby Grace, Katie, Tasunka Skawin/Her White Horse (Mrs. Little Eagle), Tiopa/Door (Ellen Brown), Pte Sanwin/White Buffalo (Katrine Ferguson), Ruth Hawk, Iha Wastewin/Good Laughing Woman (Mary Thomson), Hin Hotewin/Roan Hair (Mary Ogle), Nora Brown. Unidentified people on horseback in background.
[Wood Mountain Historical Society, Photo No. 1253]

Some women had to tend to their families' agriculture for the rest of their lives without their husbands. Mary Ogle had to continue her family's ranch with the help of her sons when her husband, William Hall Ogle returned to his native England in 1914.⁶⁶ After the First World War, Ogle came back to Wood Mountain to sell his 1,000 head of horses and over 650 head of cattle.⁶⁷ Ogle returned to England permanently after eliminating his herds. Mary (Roan Hair) Ogle continued to raise horses and still had her own brand for horses after her husband's departure.⁶⁸ In 1926 her **MO** brand was still registered under her name.⁶⁹ Mary Thomson had a similar experience when her husband, James, died in March of 1923.⁷⁰ Mary continued keeping livestock on a smaller scale and continued registering both her cattle and horse brands until at least 1926.⁷¹ Mary moved back into the adobe house on their property where she felt more

⁶⁶ Wood Mountain Historical Society, *They Came to Wood Mountain*, 34.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ CMH, *Legends of Our Times*, "Ranching, Wood Mountain Biographies," "Tasunke Hin Hotewin (Roan Horse/Mary Ogle)," http://www.historymuseum.ca/cmhc/exhibitions/aborig/rodeo/biography_33e.shtml#Tasunke-Hin-Hotewin, accessed April 14, 2014.

⁶⁹ Saskatchewan Animal Industry Branch, *Saskatchewan Horse and Cattle Brands*, Consolidated to December 31, 1926 (Regina: J.W. Reid King's Printer, 1927), 175.

⁷⁰ Wood Mountain Historical Society, *They Came to Wood Mountain*, 30.

⁷¹ Saskatchewan Animal Industry Branch, *Saskatchewan Horse and Cattle Brands*, Consolidated to December 31, 1926, 23 and 192.

comfortable after her husband's death⁷² and rented out their ranch house as the Red Cross Hospital from 1926 to 1934.⁷³

Both Mary Thomson and Mary Ogle are excellent examples of how Lakota women were capable ranch operators and very independent. Albers also found that the Dakota women of Devil Lake's Sioux Reservation who had married white men homesteading near the reservation operated the farms their husbands left them, were independent and uninhibited by government interference that other Dakota people faced in their agriculture.⁷⁴ Possibly Mary Thomson and Mary Ogle had nowhere to go after their husbands were gone, and in Mary Thomson's case, felt most comfortable on their ranches. In 1930, Mary Ogle and her son Joseph requested to become part of the reserve, but Indian Affairs denied them band membership.⁷⁵ When Ellen Brown's husband, Fred, died in 1925,⁷⁶ she returned to the U.S. and to her family there where she re-married a Lakota man at Poplar, Montana.⁷⁷ These women's families continued to live at Wood Mountain for many years where they carried on participating in ranching, farming, Lakota cultural traditions, and rodeo.

The Wood Mountain Stampede expanded following the First World War, beginning to take shape more as a rodeo rather than just races as events were added. Again, records for the rodeos are missing in some years, but beginning in 1919 and throughout the 1920s the rodeo was very active. In 1919, the horse races were still the largest part of the Stampede. Most of the horse races only paid prize money for first and second place, but first could be as much as forty dollars.⁷⁸ According to the Bank of Canada, this is equal to \$531.06 in current (2014) value,⁷⁹ and could amount to close to a month's wages for a cowboy who found steady employment.⁸⁰ By 1919 following the end of the First World War, machinery was quickly replacing the use of horses and so cowboys may have had a harder time finding continuous employment. The drought

⁷² Wood Mountain Historical Society, *They Came to Wood Mountain*, 30.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 215-216.

⁷⁴ Patricia C. Albers, "Sioux Women in Transition," 193

⁷⁵ LAC, RG 10, Volume 7973, File 62-137, Part 1, Letter from A.M. Gore to Duncan C. Scott, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, August 11, 1930; and Letter from Duncan C. Scott to W.B. Willoughby, December 18, 1930.

⁷⁶ University of Saskatchewan Microfilm Newspaper Collection, *Morning Leader*, Regina, Saskatchewan, May 7, 1925, "Obituary of original member of the N.W.M.P. and pioneer at Wood Mountain."

⁷⁷ SAB, John Okute Sica File, Correspondence, September 14, 1957.

⁷⁸ Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, Rodeo Binder 1894-1919, RG26- Rodeo, RG26.SG12.F73.1, "Rodeo Information-1919 Wood Mountain Sports."

⁷⁹ Bank of Canada, "Inflation Calculator," *Bank of Canada/Banque du Canada*, <http://www.bankofcanada.ca/rates/related/inflation-calculator/>, accessed May 5, 2014.

⁸⁰ Richard W. Slatta, *Cowboys of the Americas* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 103.

at the time in the Wood Mountain area (1918-1922) could have lessened employment opportunities as well. In 1919, an average rodeo year for the period between 1915 and 1930, the total prize money awarded was \$580,⁸¹ which was considerably more than earlier rodeos at Wood Mountain and a considerable amount of money (\$12,064.00 value in 2014).⁸² In 1919, it cost a dollar to \$2.75 to enter a race or event, and seven Lakota cowboys brought home a third of the total prize money for the rodeo/races—the most won, fifty-five dollars, by Andrew Thomson.⁸³ Usually Lakota cowboys made out well at the Wood Mountain Stampede, attesting to their cowboy skills from their working lives.

Again there were slow horse races, ladies quarter-mile horse races, and rancher only races.⁸⁴ In 1920, Elizabeth Ogle won the ladies quarter-mile horse race on a horse named Red Wing.⁸⁵ Her husband, James, also rode this horse in the half-mile ranchers' race and won first against George Thomson on Dixey who placed second, and Pete Lethbridge on Springs.⁸⁶ Joe Ogle, Dick Ogle, John Thomson, Andrew Thomson, and William Ferguson all competed in various horse races as well. Many of these men competed several times on the same horse in different races and won multiple times.⁸⁷

Some events, like horse racing and foot races, including relays and potato sack races, continued right from the start of the rodeo in 1890. Relay races were contests in which the same rider changed horses two or three times in the same race and so several fast horses were needed for an owner to win.⁸⁸ In 1925, Walter Lecaine and Joe Ogle won first in the potato race; Jack Pipe won second. George Thomson won second in the relay race and Jack Pipe won third.⁸⁹ In particular the Indian pony races were still popular, and many local Lakota people participated in them every year. Many of the winners of the Indian pony races throughout the years include Albert Brown, Willie Thomson, Walter Lecaine, Joe Ogle, Jim Wounded Horse, Joe Ferguson,

⁸¹ Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, Rodeo Binder 1894-1919, RG26- Rodeo, RG26.SG12.F73.1, "Rodeo Information-1919 Wood Mountain Sports."

⁸² Bank of Canada, "Inflation Calculator," *Bank of Canada/Banque du Canada*, <http://www.bankofcanada.ca/rates/related/inflation-calculator/>, accessed May 5, 2014.

⁸³ Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, Rodeo Binder 1894-1919, RG26- Rodeo, RG26.SG12.F73.1, "1919 Paid Out."

⁸⁴ Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, Rodeo Binder 1894-1919, RG26- Rodeo, RG26.SG12.F73.1, "Rodeo Information-1919 Wood Mountain Sports."

⁸⁵ Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, Rodeo Binder 1920-1962, RG26- Rodeo, RG26.SG12.F1.10, "Wood Mountain Rodeo 1920."

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, RG26.SG12.F1.9.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, RG26.SG12.F1.6-9

⁸⁸ Thelma Poirier and Bonnie Day, unpublished manuscript, 1997, 124.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*; and RG26.SG12.F6.1, "Wood Mountain Rodeo 1925."

and Andrew Thomson. The races were the most prominent part of the Stampede for many years, but eventually they would completely fade out as more rodeo type events took their place.

One of the rodeo events that became more central to the Stampede over the years was bronc riding. In 1919 Soak Brown won first again for "Best Bucker."⁹⁰ In 1920 Pete Lethbridge won second in the bronc riding.⁹¹ Brothers Jim, William, and Pete Lethbridge became well known cowboys in the Wood Mountain area. All three brothers farmed and cowboyed in the Wood Mountain area for many years. Jim remembered:

Rodeo riding attracted me and at age 18 I rode my first horse in Lafleche. In one way or another I took part in rodeo for twenty years. I took part in all events in the beginning but later on I specialized in bronc riding. One of my greatest thrills was when I became the first man to ride the famous bucking horse, Too High. In 1930 I competed against world champion Pete Knight in Moose Jaw where I won day money. Some of the cowboys wanted me to go with them but I did not want to leave Wood Mountain as I was in love. When I became too old to ride broncs I became a rodeo judge and I started making saddles. I worked for Eamor's saddle shop in High River, Alberta for one year to learn the trade. Most of my life has been spent working around horses, saddles and rodeo and I have enjoyed every bit of it.⁹²

Wood Mountain turned out many well known and exceptional cowboys in the early years and a number of them were Lakota, including the Lethbridges and Browns.

Different rodeo events were being added every few years in the 1920s. In 1925, a rope-spinning contest was part of the rodeo, and George Ferguson won second and fifteen dollars in the event.⁹³ In 1926 Pete Lethbridge also competed in the rope-spinning.⁹⁴ That same year there were wagon races for the first time, and Jim Lethbridge placed first and George Lecaine won second in 1926⁹⁵ and first in 1927.⁹⁶ Calf roping was also a new event in 1925, and two more Lakota cowboys, Joe Ogle and Bud Lamb (the son of Nellie Thomson and Elmer Lamb Sr.),

⁹⁰ Thelma Poirier and Bonnie Day, unpublished manuscript, 1997, 124; RG26.SG12.F6.1, "Wood Mountain Rodeo 1925."

⁹¹ Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, Rodeo Binder 1920-1962, RG26- Rodeo, RG26.SG12.F1.13, "Wood Mountain Rodeo 1920."

⁹² CMH, *Legends of Our Times*, "Ranching, Wood Mountain Biographies," "Mato Luta (Red Bear/Jim Lethbridge)," http://www.historymuseum.ca/cmc/exhibitions/aborig/rodeo/biography_28e.shtml#Mato-Luta, accessed April 19, 2014.

⁹³ Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, Rodeo Binder 1920-1962, "Wood Mountain Turf Company Limited 1925," RG26.SG12.F.2-.10.

⁹⁴ Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, Rodeo Binder 1920-1962, RG26- Rodeo, RG26.SG12.F7.2, "Wood Mountain Rodeo Information Sheet 1926."

⁹⁵ *Ibid*; and Wood Mountain Historical Society, *They Came to Wood Mountain*, 215.

⁹⁶ Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, Rodeo Binder 1920-1962, RG26.SG12.F.4- .10., Wood Mountain Turf Club 1926.

took first and second.⁹⁷ Steer riding was added in 1926, which was won by Howard Thomson.⁹⁸ Cow milking was also added that same year and Richard (Dick) Ogle came in second.⁹⁹ In 1930, a ladies relay race was also held for the first time.¹⁰⁰ Roman racing—which was done by standing on top of two horses, one leg on each horse—and a wild horse race were added in 1928.¹⁰¹ Charles Lecaine won the Roman race in 1928,¹⁰² and Pete Lethbridge also did roman riding/racing.¹⁰³ Pete recalled:

In the early twenties I worked for a Montana farmer driving four horses for field work. It was quite a long walk to the field and back, so I would ride one of the horses. One day I started riding standing up and I soon put one foot on either horse. After that summer I started to train myself and [my] horse for Roman riding. I had a horse called Spot which I trained. I performed with this horse at many rodeos and in the meantime I kept looking for a second horse. In 1924 I worked for a rancher, Abe Price, and while there I started using Abe's top horse, Scobey, along with Spot for my roman team.¹⁰⁴

The Wood Mountain Stampede expanded and Lakota cowboys and cowgirls were increasing their horsemanship and livestock handling skills to compete in new events. The second generation of Wood Mountain Lakota people were particularly interested in competing in the rodeo and did very well in it every year.

Many Lakota people were hired to prepare for the rodeo, races, and other events with the Stampede. Lakota men such as Joseph Ogle, Albert Brown, George Thomson, Walter Lecaine, James Ogle, Charles Lecaine, Willie Thomson, Billy Brown, John Thomson, Jack Pipe, and George Lecaine were hired by the Turf Club to do a variety of jobs before, during, and after the rodeo.¹⁰⁵ Some of these jobs included preparing the baseball grounds,¹⁰⁶ fencing,¹⁰⁷ playing

⁹⁷ Wood Mountain Historical Society, *They Came to Wood Mountain*, 215.

⁹⁸ Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, "Wood Mountain Rodeo Information Sheet 1926."

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, Rodeo Binder 1920-1962, RG26-Rodeo, RG26.SG12.F11.1, "Wood Mountain Rodeo Information Sheet 1930."

¹⁰¹ Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, Rodeo Binder 1920-1962, RG26- Rodeo, RG26.SG12.F9.1, "Wood Mountain Rodeo 1928."

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Canadian Museum of History, *Legends of Our Times*, "Ranching, Wood Mountain Biographies," "Hehaka Glesak (Spotted Elk/Peter Lethbridge),"

http://www.historymuseum.ca/cmc/exhibitions/aborig/rodeo/biography_27e.shtml#Hehaka-Gleska, accessed April 19, 2014.

¹⁰⁴ Pete Lethbridge, "Pete Lethbridge," in *Waverly #44*, ed. Sonia Falconer (Glentworth: Rural Municipality of Waverly #44, 1978), 278-279.

¹⁰⁵ Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, Rodeo Binder 1920-1962, RG26- Rodeo, RG26.SG12.F1.15, "Wood Mountain Rodeo 1920;" RG26.SG12.F3.2 to .7, "Wood Mountain 1922;" RG26.SG12.F4.3-.8, "The Wood Mountain Turf Club 1923;" RG26.SG12.F5.3-.12, "The Wood Mountain Turf Club 1924;" and RG26.SG12.F.2-.10, "Wood Mountain Turf Company Limited 1925."

music for the dance and cleaning the dancehall,¹⁰⁸ preparing the racetrack, building corrals, and supplying materials like poles and wire.¹⁰⁹ Lakota people were not just involved as contestants, but had important roles in helping to make the rodeo function.



Figure 12: Pete Lethbridge trick roping while standing on his horse at the Wood Mountain Stampede, 1926. [Wood Mountain Historical Society, Photo No. 0255]

Some Lakota men also worked at the rodeo as hazers. In the years before a rodeo arena was built, the events took place in a large open area without corrals or chutes. Men were hired as hazers to keep the livestock, especially bucking broncs, in a safe area away from spectators and the bush while contestants were riding. The job of hazing would have been similar to the job of pick-up men in current rodeos because both make sure the livestock and contestants are handled as safely as possible. In the 1920s, men were usually paid between three and ten dollars for hazing.¹¹⁰ Lakota cowboys often played the role of hazers including Walter Lecaine and Joe

¹⁰⁶ Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, Rodeo Binder 1920-1962, RG26- Rodeo, RG26.SG12.F1.14, "Wood Mountain Rodeo 1920."

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., RG26.SG12.F1.15.

¹⁰⁸ Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, Rodeo Binder 1920-1962, RG26- Rodeo, RG26.SG12.F1.15, "Wood Mountain Rodeo 1920;" and RG26.SG12.F3.2 to .7, "Wood Mountain 1922."

¹⁰⁹ Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, Rodeo Binder 1920-1962, "Wood Mountain Turf Club 1923" and "The Wood Mountain Turf Club 1924."

¹¹⁰ Ibid.; RG26.SG12.F.2-.10, "Wood Mountain Turf Company Limited 1925;" and RG26.SG12.F.4-.10, Wood Mountain Turf Club 1926.

Ogle, Andrew Thomson, Albert Brown, James Ogle, and Jack Pipe.¹¹¹ By 1926 or 1927 there was an arena built so hazers were not needed in the same capacity as before.¹¹²

James Ogle became a central part of the rodeo by supplying horses for bucking contests. He first supplied stock in 1919 and won ten dollars for the best bucking horse, a prize that was a new addition to the rodeo that year.¹¹³ In the 1920 Stampede, James Ogle had four horses entered in the bucking contest: Jess, Pet, Coulee, and Shorty.¹¹⁴ Beginning in 1925, he was a contractor every year until 1954 for the Wood Mountain Stampede.¹¹⁵ James was paid as the stock contractor: in 1925 he was paid one hundred dollars¹¹⁶ and in 1926, he was paid \$230 for supplying cattle and broncs.¹¹⁷ E.R. Koester, a Wood Mountain rancher, said that James Ogle's bucking horses were so good that some were put in professional American bucking horse strings.¹¹⁸

Lakota people had many roles in the Wood Mountain Stampede and many of them were central to the operation of the rodeo. The Stampede benefited from their participation as workers, contestants, and stock contractors. The Lakota people who held these different roles also benefited because they were able to make some money—sometimes decent wages and prize money—and because they were able to contribute to and be part of the wider Wood Mountain community through the rodeo.

Throughout the early rodeo years, a parade and powwow was held at the rodeo. The powwow was held before the rodeo dance in the bowery and a low admission fee was charged at the bowery¹¹⁹ gate and then given to the Lakota.¹²⁰ In 1921, prize money was awarded for the

¹¹¹ Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, Rodeo Binder 1920-1962, RG26- Rodeo, RG26.SG12.F4.3-.8, "The Wood Mountain Turf Club 1923"; RG26.SG12.F5.3-.12, "The Wood Mountain Turf Club 1924;" RG26.SG12.F.2-.10, "Wood Mountain Turf Company Limited 1925;" and RG26.SG12.F7.1, "Wood Mountain Rodeo 1926."

¹¹² See Wood Mountain Historical Society Photos No. 0257, 0258, 0267, and 0270.

¹¹³ Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, RG26.SG12.F73.1, "Rodeo Information-1919 Wood Mountain Sports."

¹¹⁴ Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, RG26.SG12.F1.13, "Wood Mountain Rodeo 1920."

¹¹⁵ Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, "A Review of Wood Mountain Sports" by E.R. Koester, *Assiniboia Times*, May 6, 1964, page 2.

¹¹⁶ "Wood Mountain Turf Company Limited 1925", RG26.SG12.F.2-.10.

¹¹⁷ Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, Rodeo Binder 1920-1962, RG26- Rodeo, RG26.SG12.F7.1, "Wood Mountain Rodeo 1926."

¹¹⁸ Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, "A Review of Wood Mountain Sports" by E.R. Koester, *Assiniboia Times*, May 6, 1964, page 2.

¹¹⁹ A powwow bowery is an enclosed circular arena like area that was surrounded by leafy branches in which the dance grounds were situated, sometimes with a flagpole in the middle. Drum groups and singers are set up around the inside perimeter of the bowery with the space in the center for the dancers to perform in. Sometimes there are benches and other seating areas around the perimeter to the outside of the drum groups in the bowery as well.

¹²⁰ Thelma Poirier and Bonnie Day, unpublished manuscript, 1997, 132.

first time for the parade, \$150 total that year.¹²¹ The First Nations participants were given money for the best regalia, a category in which the Lakota often won. Big Joe Ferguson would often win prize money for his participation in the Indian parade in his regalia; for example he won twenty-five dollars in 1925.¹²² In 1926, Emma Lecaine won five dollars in prize money for the “Indian Travois” category and Big Joe Ferguson again won twenty-five dollars for the “Best Costume” in the Indian parade.¹²³ Little Eagle, Lizzie Ogle, and a Thomson woman also won best costume categories on the first and second days of the rodeo, which shows that the parade opened up the rodeo on both days.¹²⁴ The 1928 rodeo gave out ninety-six dollars’ worth of prizes for the Indian parade and contests, and the Indian parade was separately entered in the Turf Club’s expenditures as costing fifty dollars,¹²⁵ so the parade was also financed in other ways besides the prize money. Sometimes the Turf Club gave the Lakota and other First Nations attending the rodeo a slaughtered beef at rodeo time for a feast.¹²⁶ Likely, the gift of the beef indicates that the Turf Club recognized the importance of the Lakota participation in the Stampede, not just in rodeo events and races, but in their traditional regalia and performing dances, especially since these “Indian” showcases drew in crowds from a larger area. Again in 1928, Big Joe Ferguson won “Best dressed Indian” along with Mrs. Mary Thomson, Mrs. A. (Albert or Alonzo) Brown, and Billy Brown.¹²⁷ Although the powwow and parade were especially for First Nations, the Lakota were not restricted to the events put on only for them, and this was just one of many ways the Lakota were involved in the rodeo.

¹²¹ Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, Rodeo Binder 1920-1962, RG26- Rodeo, RG26.SG12.F2.1, "Wood Mountain Rodeo Information Sheet 1921."

¹²² Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, RG26.SG12.F.2-.10, "Wood Mountain Turf Company Limited 1925."

¹²³ Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, RG26.SG12.F7.1, "Wood Mountain Rodeo 1926" and; RG26.SG12.F.4-.10, Wood Mountain Turf Club 1926.

¹²⁴ Ibid; and Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, RG26.SG12.F7.2, "Wood Mountain Rodeo Information Sheet 1926." The Thomson woman’s first name is illegible in the original 1926 records.

¹²⁵ Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, RG26.SG1.F3.1, "Statement of receipts and expenditures for Wood Mountain Turf Club for 1928."

¹²⁶ Personal communication with Thelma Poirier, June 2013; and Thelma Poirier and Bonnie Day, unpublished manuscript, 1997, 134.

¹²⁷ Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, Rodeo Binder 1920-1962, RG26- Rodeo, RG26.SG12.F9.1, "Wood Mountain Rodeo 1928."



Figure 13: Parade at the Wood Mountain Stampede, 1927, with Lakota in the lead. Note the travois at the front and the Lakota camp of tents on the hillside in the background.

[Wood Mountain Historical Society, Photo No. 0269]

To see the Lakota in their traditional dress and performing dances was a large draw for people attending the rodeo from outside the Wood Mountain area. In 1928 *The Morning Leader* newspaper out of Regina ran an article about the Wood Mountain rodeo which included a piece about the First Nations: “The Sioux Indians of Wood Mountain are mixing war paint and they will be visited by the Redskins from Fort Peck, Montana. There will be everything to bring back memories of the old days, grass dances, sun dances, war dances of all descriptions and a sham battle.”¹²⁸ *The Leader* in Regina also reported on the rodeo and mentioned that the “Indians in native dress gave powwow and dances in front of grandstand at 12p.m.”¹²⁹ The article listed the winners of the “Indian chief dress parade”; first to Jack Yellowbank, second to Red Elk, and third to Big Joe and the “Indian squaw parade”; first to Eloraine Red Elk and second to Mrs. Jim Thompson (Mary Thomson).¹³⁰ Lizzie Ogle won second in the “Best dressed cow girl” contest as well.¹³¹

These articles use language that reinforces stereotypical views of First Nations, especially their supposedly war-loving nature reflected in the dances the first article describes and how First Nations men are “chiefs” and women are “squaws” in the second article. The articles treat First Nations, and specifically the Lakota, as purely spectacles for entertainment that are caught in the past and who want to relive it in some way or “bring back memories of the old days” as the first article put it. Historian Clyde Ellis wrote that powwows were “Heralded by most observers and outsiders as remnants of a glorious past that resists change....[however] In its evolution from

¹²⁸ Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, Rodeo Binder 1920-1962, RG26- Rodeo, RG26.SG12.F9.4, *The Morning Leader*, Regina, July 7, 1928, page 19.

¹²⁹ Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, Rodeo Binder 1920-1962, RG26- Rodeo, RG26.SG12.F9.3, "Real Finish to Wood Mountain Annual Rodeo," *The Leader*, Regina, June 24, 1928.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

tribally specific, society-centered dance to community-wide, often intertribal, expression, the powwow has become, among other things, an event that mediates the place and meaning of change.”¹³² Of course, these newspaper articles do not recognize powwow as expression rather than just performance, nor the change that accompanies powwows. These newspapers relied on outsider, generalized depictions of First Nations people and cultures to try to represent the Lakota and their involvement in dances and powwows at the Wood Mountain Stampede. Certainly the Lakota and other First Nations who took part in the powwows and parades at the rodeo did not view their involvement in such ways.

These newspaper articles can provide glimpses into how the Lakota may have viewed the rodeo and their involvement. The articles mention how other First Nations people would be

attending the rodeo, and this celebration surely provided a time for First Nations family and friends, especially from Fort Peck, Montana, to visit the Lakota people at Wood Mountain. Along with the gathering, the feast from the beef provided by the Turf Club would have echoed back to summer feasting traditions done for



Figure 14: Ayuta Najin Ktewin/Killed the Enemy that Stood Looking/Susan Goodtrack and Oye Waste/Good Track/ Tom Good Track at Wood Mountain Stampede.

[Wood Mountain Historical Society, Photo No. 0094]

generations before. The rodeo was also a time when the Lakota people could continue dancing traditions even if they were done more for entertainment purposes than spiritual reasons. Social and cultural aspects still played largely into the dancing, singing, drumming, and regalia that was presented by the Lakota at the Wood Mountain Stampede. Ellis also wrote: “Part ceremony and part public show, with roots in Indian and non-Indian worlds, the modern powwow has become

¹³² Cyldé Ellis, “‘We Don’t Want Your Rations, We Want This Dance’: The Changing Use of Song and Dance on the Southern Plains,” *The Western Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 30, no. 2 (Summer 1999): 134.

an arena for maintaining and reinterpreting cultural practices that might otherwise disappear.”¹³³ The Lakota people were still involved in other cultural traditions that incorporated dancing, singing, and drumming though, and the powwow at the Stampede was just one public expression of these traditions. Lizzie Ogle remembered her brother drumming for sun dances when she was a child.¹³⁴ Her brother, Walter Lecaine was well known as a singer and drummer of traditional Lakota songs,¹³⁵ and George Ferguson was also a drummer and later a Lakota dance judge.¹³⁶ So the Lakota were not just dancing and singing for rodeos and other attractions, they were also still involved with traditional dancing and singing customs not meant for only public displays.

Lizzie Ogle’s participation in both the “Indian costume” and “cowgirl costume” contests emphasizes how the Lakota crossed “categories” not only in rodeo competitions but in their identities and practices as well. Those within and outside of the Wood Mountain community recognized Lizzie Ogle and other Lakota people as both Lakota and cowboys/cowgirls. The two “categories” of cowboy/cowgirl and Lakota were not divided and opposing, but fluid and familiar for Lizzie and many other Lakota people who crossed the margins of both every day and not just at the rodeo or for contests. Lakota people could take what they wanted from cowboy lifestyles and add it to their existing Lakota frameworks and identities. For second generation Lakota people at Wood Mountain like Lizzie Ogle, they were born into and grew up with the blending of cowboy and Lakota ways as their parents made transitions and still remained Lakota. Lizzie and her husband James and other Lakota couples would continue this process into the next generation as well. Lizzie Ogle is an excellent example of the blending process and also of the way she really lived enjoying and using the cowboy and Lakota ways. She especially became an advocate for Lakota customs later in life with her continued participation in dancing, creating traditional regalia, and beadwork and her willingness to share those things and educate others.

The costume contests described above were a way that the Wood Mountain Stampede encouraged the continuation of traditional skills such as leather working, beadwork, and creating traditional regalia that were used at least for special occasions. Other traditional aspects such as the horse travois used by Emma Lecaine were also encouraged by the parades, powwows, and contests the Stampede included specifically for First Nations and local Lakota people. Julia

¹³³ Cylde Ellis, ““We Don’t Want Your Rations, We Want This Dance,”” 134.

¹³⁴ Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, RG 14-Indians, RG14.F1.13, Thelma Poirier, "The Spirit of Wood Mountain Lives: Ghosts of Many Dancers," Tribune Tourism Guide, June 11, 1985, pages 4-6.

¹³⁵ Thelma Poirier and Bonnie Day, unpublished manuscript, 1997, 92.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 91.

Lethbridge (Wanbli Sunpagewin), Katrine Ferguson (Pte Sanwin), and Mrs. Alec Wounded Horse (Wahuwapa Skawin) were prolific beadworkers, and some of their beadwork is included in collections at the Moose Jaw Museum¹³⁷ Elizabeth (Lizzie) Ogle and Christina Lecaine (John Lecaine's third wife) also were creative beadworkers, and a lot of their work is still owned by their families.¹³⁸

James Wounded Horse donated a collection of beadwork to the Glenbow Museum in Calgary in 1964. Members of his family made the items: his mother Wahuapa/Corn and his grandmother, Anpetu Wastewin/Good Day Woman (Lean Crow's wife.) The collection includes moccasins, pipe bags, leggings, a cradleboard, toys, a necklace, a martingale, and a bridle, and two headdresses. Lean Crow and his son Robert Lean Crow made the headdresses and the two women, Corn and Good Day Woman, made almost all the other items. The martingale and bridle are especially distinctive because they were made by James' mother, Corn, for his use in horse races at Qu'Appelle.¹³⁹ These items show the continued importance of horses to the Lakota people, how women were still involved in traditional skills, and the pride taken to decorate the horse tack used by family members, not to hunt buffalo, but to race like was done for generations as well.

Some Lakota men also made western gear for their own use and for sale. In the 1920s, Pete Lethbridge and Albert Brown began making saddles commercially. Later Bill and Jim Lethbridge also began making saddles. At first, the brothers fixed tack for other cowboys they met at rodeos,¹⁴⁰ and they used their skills to start creating their own tack. The Lethbridge brothers' saddles became well known in the Wood Mountain area and many local families still have saddles made by them. Thelma Poirier wrote that the saddles were in demand because they could be purchased at a low price. She also wrote about how Pete learned blacksmithing from a farmer he worked for, and so he made stirrups for the saddles and bits for bridles. She goes on to explain the saddle making process which Pete and his brothers used when they first started their craft:

¹³⁷ Thelma Poirier and Bonnie Day, unpublished manuscript, 1997, 111 and 113.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 113-114.

¹³⁹ Glenbow Museum and Archives, James Wounded Horse Collection, AF 682, AF 683 A-B, AF 684, AF 685, AF 687, AF 688, AF 689, AF 690, AF 691, AF 692 A-B, AF 693 A-B, AF 694 A-C, AF 695, AF 696 A-B, AF 697, AF 698, AF 699.

¹⁴⁰ Philip Lethbridge, interview with author, July 19, 2013.

At first saddle trees and forms were carved from maples found in the area. Sometimes Pete tanned his own hides. Cow hides were obtained in return for assisting nearby ranchers and homesteaders with butchering. The hides were soaked in a solution of wood ashes to remove the hair, and then fit and stretched wet across the tree and the form and then hand stitched into place. Other parts of the saddle were cut and stitched from tanned hide. As the leather was not fully tanned it was called rawhide.¹⁴¹

Later in the 1930s, the Lethbridges started to make saddles from purchased tanned leather and also began tooling designs on their saddles. Jim Lethbridge went to High River, Alberta in the 1940s to learn saddlemaking at the Eamor saddle shop and then returned to Wood Mountain to continue making saddles.¹⁴²

Most cowboys made their own gear, and so did Lakota cowboys at Wood Mountain. In the 1920s, some Lakota men made an assortment of cowboy gear besides saddles. The Lethbridge brothers also made braided quirts, hakamores, and bridles.¹⁴³ John Lecaine made angora goat hair and horsehide chaps.¹⁴⁴ Brothers Willie, Andrew, and George Thomson made halters, headstalls, hakamores, and ropes and continued to do so after these things were available for purchase in stores.¹⁴⁵ All of the gear these Lakota men made shows how the second generation of Lakota people at Wood Mountain lived and enjoyed cowboy lifestyles. Their work as cowboys and ranchers was not just to make money or survive, but also was enjoyable to them. Cowboy and Lakota ways were continued and intertwined.

The Lakota at Wood Mountain not only adapted but were able to keep traditional cultural ways alive through ranching and rodeo because



Figure 15: John Lecaine with his son John Jr. who is wearing the chaps his father made, 1940. [Wood Mountain Rodeo-Ranch Museum, Photo No. 0083]

¹⁴¹ Thelma Poirier and Bonnie Day, unpublished manuscript, 1997, 118.

¹⁴² Ibid, 119.

¹⁴³ Ibid, 117-118.

¹⁴⁴ Thelma Poirier and Bonnie Day, unpublished manuscript, 1997, 121.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

these activities allowed the Lakota people to be more independent and self-sufficient overall. One of the cultural things the Lakota people were able to maintain while they were transitioning into Canadian rural society was their traditional spirituality. Aboriginal traditional spirituality can be hard to research in Canadian nineteenth- and twentieth-century history because of the assimilative policies directed at Aboriginal people by the federal government. Many Aboriginal people and communities practiced their traditions privately and even underground in order to escape detection by Indian agents and missionaries so that they could continue on with their ways. However, the Lakota people did not have to deal with an Indian agent because they chose James Thomson as their government representative. He seemed not to be concerned with assimilating the Lakota (especially since he married a Lakota woman, had Lakota children, and spoke the Lakota language) and there was no missionary influence at the reserve.

The retention of language is an interesting topic because it goes beyond the spoken language to the written Lakota language. As is seen throughout the chapters, second generation Lakota children were given both English and Lakota names and they also spoke the Lakota language. Several Lakota people were able to write in the Lakota language as well, including Alec Wounded Horse (Tasunka Opi), who wrote a letter in Lakota to Glen Campbell in 1912 about his concerns with the reserve,¹⁴⁶ John Lecaine, who wrote a story in Lakota in 1938 for *The Indian Missionary Record* publication,¹⁴⁷ and possibly James Thomson, who enumerated the Lakota on the reserve in their proper Lakota names (without English translations) in 1921 for the census.¹⁴⁸ Both on and off reserve families spoke Lakota, but it is unclear where some learned to write in Lakota. The retention of the spoken language and the extra effort to learn the written Lakota language show that the language was important and used within Lakota families and the Lakota community.

A 1919 newspaper article titled "Sioux Tribe Keeps Faith of Fathers" laments that the Lakota at Wood Mountain had not received mass on the reserve since it was last given twelve

¹⁴⁶ LAC, RG 10, Vol. 7779, File 27137-1, Reel C12061, Letter from Tasunka Opi (Alec Wounded Horse) to Glen Campbell, no date.

¹⁴⁷ John LeCaine (Woonkapisini), "Ikcewicasa Oyate Tacankupi (Sioux)," Part 1, *The Indian Missionary Record*, Volume 1, No. 3, March 1938, page 4; and "Ikcewicasa Oyate Tacankupi" Part 2, *The Indian Missionary Record*, Volume 1, No. 7, July-August 1938, page 6.

¹⁴⁸ Ancestry.com, *1921 Census of Canada* [database on-line], (Provo, UT: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2013), <http://search.ancestry.ca/search/db.aspx?dbid=8991>, accessed April 30, 2014, original from: LAC, RG 31 Statistics Canada, *Sixth Census of Canada*, 1921, Saskatchewan, District No. 220, Sub-District No. 79, Wood Mountain, pages 1-2.

years previous.¹⁴⁹ A Catholic priest, Father Etienne from Lebreton, had visited Wood Mountain and found “that the medicine man still practices his art on the reserve and during the time he [Father Etienne] spent there, this man had two or three meetings and made addresses to his fellow braves to beware of the much praying man in the black robe.”¹⁵⁰ Of the forty-eight people he said lived on the reserve, he reported that only one was a Christian.¹⁵¹ This newspaper article was written no doubt to denounce the way the Lakota were retaining their traditions and spirituality, but it does show how the Lakota were resisting and/or avoiding assimilation to Euro-Canadian religion. The obvious retention of traditional spirituality also demonstrates that the Lakota only adopted what they wanted from Euro-Canadian society—such as agriculture—while they maintained other cultural things. This selective adoption and retention indicates the Wood Mountain Lakota people’s blending of both traditional and new ways that allowed them to transition to settler society and survive in it while maintaining their Lakota identities and understandings. The newspaper article demonstrates the lack of government and church interference in Lakota people’s lives at Wood Mountain that directly helped the Lakota to retain traditional ways as they saw fit.

Another issue Father Etienne reported on was the Lakota people’s alarm at the reserve shrinking in size due to soldier grants. In 1919, Indian Affairs and the Department of the Interior began discussing the use of the reserve and the issue of soldier grants in the Wood Mountain area. William Graham, the Indian Commissioner, wrote to the Minister of the Interior in April 1919 to express his opinion that the western half of the reserve was not used by the Lakota and he doubted it would ever be used, and therefore he wanted that half of the reserve opened up for soldier settlements.¹⁵² Graham also wrote as further justification for his opinion, echoing many Indian Affairs officials before him, “the Sioux in question are American Indians and have no real claim on this country.”¹⁵³ Several other letters from veterans asking about the reserve land accompanied Graham’s letter. By May 1919, half of the reserve was taken from the Lakota and

¹⁴⁹ University of Saskatchewan Microfilm Newspaper Collection, *Regina Leader Post*, “Sioux Tribe Keeps Faith of Fathers,” September 6, 1919, page 17.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² LAC, RG 10, Volume 7535, File 26,137-1, Reel C14808, Letter from Department of Indian Affairs Commissioner William Graham to the Minister of the Interior Arthur Meighen, April 22, 1919.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

given out as soldier grants for veterans of the First World War.¹⁵⁴ Unfortunately Indian Affairs did not recognize the Lakota people's persistence and self-sufficiency and the often-repeated excuse of the Lakota being "American Indians" was used again to injure the Lakota. After twenty years of land being temporarily reserved for the Lakota at Wood Mountain, what was left was finally set aside permanently as a reserve by Order in Council no. 1775 on August 5, 1930 as reserve no. 160.¹⁵⁵

By 1930, the Lakota were well established at Wood Mountain and had become cowgirls, cowboys, farmers, and ranchers while remaining Lakota. They did not have to sacrifice their language, identities, spirituality, kinship, or their many understandings and traditions to take on the cowboy lifestyle and become part of the wider Wood Mountain community. Throughout the generations of Lakota at Wood Mountain from 1880 to 1930, their *Lakota-ness* was strengthened between the off and on reserve families through their shared language, customs, and pursuits in agriculture and rodeo. The new strategies for survival such as farming and ranching helped the Lakota to adjust to the changing situations they faced in colonial Canada. The persistence of these practices also meant that they did not throw away the old ways, but integrated the new into their existing Lakota worldviews and ways. By 1930, the Lakota were members of the entire Wood Mountain community, some were thriving with their agriculture and cowboy lifestyles, and all were successful in remaining Lakota.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., Letter from Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs Duncan C. Scott to the Deputy Minister of the Department of the Interior, May 12, 1919.

¹⁵⁵ *Canada Gazette*, Vol. 64, July-September, 1930, Order in Council no. 1775, August 5, 1930, <http://www.gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p2/2008/2008-05-28/html/sup-eng.html>, accessed January 14, 2014.

Conclusion

Throughout this thesis Wood Mountain Lakota knowledge, experiences, and memories have been shared in order to offer one understanding of their history. More work is still needed on Wood Mountain Lakota topics, especially topics that the Wood Mountain Lakota community consider important for their own research needs. The examination of how ranching and rodeo was blended with traditional Lakota culture at Wood Mountain is only one part of the overall Lakota history and culture there. I have argued that this blending process was the means to provide cultural, economic, and social stability for the Wood Mountain Lakota people from 1880 to 1930 when pressures from settler societies were increasing. Establishing this argument shows that the Lakota people (like other Aboriginal people) were resisting government assimilation, finding new survival strategies and new ways to stay Lakota. This study has shown that Lakota people were skilled cowboys and cowgirls who could participate and compete with non-Aboriginal society on equal standing while still remaining Lakota.

The Lakota people at Wood Mountain were able to be independent and develop a relationship with the settler community in the vicinity that was based on mutual benefit especially in their shared ranching and rodeo pursuits. The sense of community and family always supported the Lakota people in times of hardship, and therefore Lakota cultural ways connected to respect, sharing, kinship, and generosity provided the foundation at Wood Mountain for them.

Because the Wood Mountain Lakota population is small and is not part of any Canadian treaty, they have been overlooked although their experiences and contributions are significant. This thesis strived to provide an arena for the Wood Mountain Lakota people to expand their voices and bring more awareness to their history. More importantly, I hope this thesis has allowed Wood Mountain Lakota people to share their history, identities, and culture among themselves in new and expanded ways that continue beyond this thesis. I hope this thesis also opens the way for more discussion of and action on past and current topics that the Lakota people feel are important.

Other research is needed to help fill the literature void on Lakota history as a whole. Further avenues of investigation could include Lakota people's abilities not only to move between the margins of settler and Lakota/Aboriginal spheres but also to move across the physical Canada-U.S. international border. The Lakota were a borderland people in the

nineteenth and twentieth centuries that utilized a variety of strategies to maintain their cultural integrity and community ties, and yet adapt to changing settler conditions. How did their borderland and cross-border interactions with Lakota people in both the U.S. and Canada influence Lakota identity, kinship, and culture? How long were Lakota people able to move in the borderlands to access areas of their traditional territory on both sides of the border, for what reasons, and in what forms? Does this movement within Lakota territory still exist today? What can Lakota mobility and movement, especially after the reserve/reservation period in Canada and the U.S. (post 1870s and 1880s) tell us about Lakota cultural retention/adaptation, collective identity, community/kinship, and sovereignty? What were relations like between Lakota people and other aboriginal people in Canada, for example, between the Lakota and Blackfoot after Chiefs Sitting Bull and Crowfoot met to discuss peace or with the Nez Perce who were trying to reach the Canadian side of the border (and those that may have made it to Lakota camps in Canada)? I hope to explore some of these potential research questions in the future as well.

Because this thesis only examined a fifty-year period, there are many more avenues of research available on Lakota history in Canada, especially before 1880 and after 1930. Further research could also assist the Lakota more in their present concern of entering into a treaty relationship with the Canadian government as scholar Leo J. Omani pointed out in his dissertation. Like the Lakota people in Saskatchewan, there are many other First Nations and Métis communities that have been overlooked and ignored by scholars, the general public, and governments. This thesis may assist in providing a way to understand Aboriginal people's identities, cultures, histories, and communities that do not fit into standard views of reserves, treaties, and the Indian Act. Nations such as the Lubicon Cree in northern Alberta and the history of the Nez Perce in Canada may benefit from this kind of study because they are smaller communities that have been for the most part ignored.

This thesis could also be a model for examining many other indigenous people's experiences with coping and adapting to settler societies without creating narratives only focused on loss or ideas of static, "authentic" forms of past Indigenous cultures but instead the ways Indigenous cultures are living and always changing. Rather, by examining the loss, retention, and variation of many different physical and cultural aspects it can help other indigenous people regain agency in their histories and demonstrate the human-ness sometimes stripped from indigenous people through narrow approaches.

Some Canadians believed that farmers, ranchers, and Aboriginal people would disappear, but this has not happened even though in the past Aboriginal populations were decimated and at present the numbers of farmers and ranchers are dwindling. There have been and still are increasing pressures on all of their lands and ways of life but possibly the pressures have brought the two groups even more common interests and interactions, especially for Aboriginal people who are involved in agriculture. One such current example is the Cowboy Indian Alliance group made up of mostly American farmers, ranchers, and tribal communities that have been protesting the Keystone XL pipeline in the U.S. because of their shared concern for the land, communities, and ways of life the pipeline will impact.¹ The overlapping of worldviews, lifestyles, and pursuits between Aboriginal nations and farmers/ranchers therefore is not confined to the past, and definitely is not based on only conflict but also on what is often overlooked: cooperation.

The Lakota people still celebrate their community, history, and culture at Wood Mountain, particularly at the annual powwow at the Wood Mountain Lakota First Nation reserve. Some Lakota people who live away from Wood Mountain express their identities through art like Dana Claxton and some through speaking the Lakota language like Elder Hartland Goodtrack. Some Lakota people still pursue ranching and horse-related recreational activities at Wood Mountain as well. The Lakota identity and sense of community are alive and well among Wood Mountain Lakota people no matter where they reside.

¹ Connie Walker, "First Nations activists join anti-Keystone XL rally in Washington," *CBC News*, April 25, 2014, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/first-nations-activists-join-anti-keystone-xl-rally-in-washington-1.2621909>, accessed June 20, 2014.

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